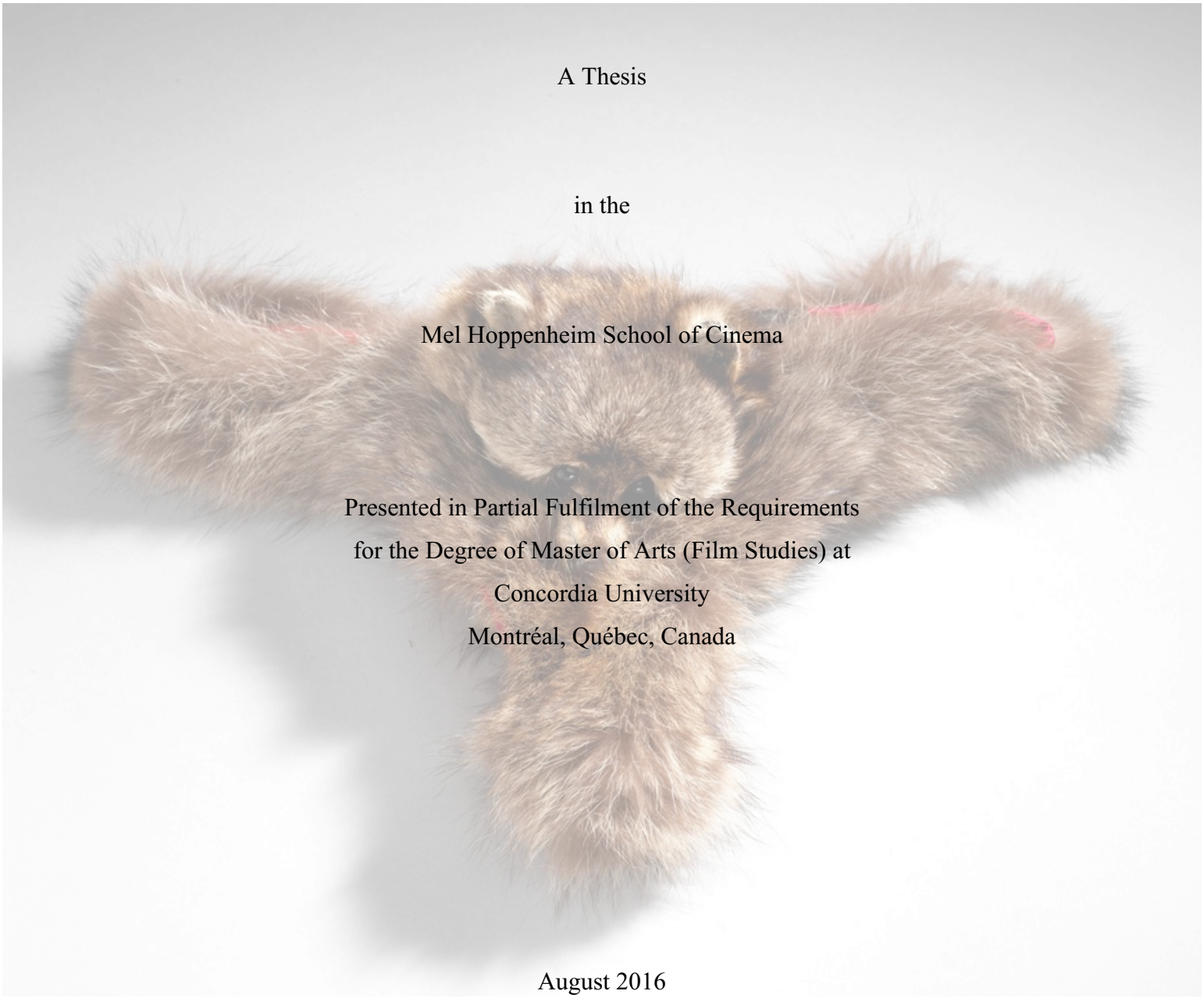
Up and Coming

The Media Mix, Pornoarchaeology, and Architecting of Kent Monkman's Cinematic World

Braden Lee Scott



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ABSTRACT

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Braden Scott

Canadian Indigenous multidisciplinary artist Kent Monkman's work has inspired many scholars to write on contemporary art as an indicator of socio-historical politics pertaining to Indigenous identities, postcolonial atrocities, and queer sexualities. Despite this rather large and emerging field of what I like to call "Monkman studies," there is a constant avoidance among scholars to discuss how the works themselves instigate conversations around sexuality and race, how their chosen forms of media play a part in this process, and what it means that they exist in and as a network. *Up and Coming* is a necessary inclusion within Monkman studies that moves with the works as a way to understand how their specific forms of media play a part in the process of politics. This is not an intervention or rerouting of what should be said on Monkman's work, but rather, a thesis that contributes to the socio-historical complexities of the world he has designed for his artist avatar Miss Chief Eagle Testickle. This is achieved by first closely examining the media used to fabricate Miss Chief's universe. After establishing Miss Chief as a transmedia figure, I consult media archaeology (through porno-archaeology) in the formation of Monkman's aesthetic—opening Miss Chief's world beyond the artist's oeuvre and into a much larger matrix of relationality and meaning. Monkman screens his films inside museum installations, structures that remix traditional nomadic Indigenous shelters with spaces of cinematic exhibition. Since Miss Chief is part of these films, and the installations double as her *boudoir*s, I argue that they are architectural nodes that allow viewers to enter the space of her network. Through theories of architectural space, erotic desire as a process of creation, and media archaeology, I place Monkman's work within a system of knowledge that understands the network as spatialised and necessary in the mediation of Indigenous traditions of storytelling and healing.

Figure 0.1 – Part of Miss Chief's warrior outfit: Kent Monkman, *Louis Vuitton Quiver*, 2007.

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INTRODUCTION

Desire and its object are one and the same thing:
the machine, as a machine of a machine.[1]

– Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*

Researching and writing on Canadian Indigenous artist Kent Monkman for a thesis in film studies is an interdisciplinary task, as his cinematic work relates to his paintings, performance, crafted items, and installations. With rapidly growing art stardom that has exceeded fame within Canadian borders, a rather large and constantly growing milieu of scholars from across multiple disciplines under the humanities umbrella have written and continue to write on the artist's life and work. At a certain point in the process of conducting the research for this thesis, amid the plethora of articles, chapters, and exhibition reviews, I wondered if there was really any need to continue writing about Monkman—what else could be said? In addition to the large amount of interest in his work, there is already plenty of overlap in the existing scholarship with recurring usage of subversion, inversion, and decolonisation as the arguments central to almost all written articles.[2] Issues of queer sexuality, Indigenous politics that talk back to Western ideology, his mixed Swampy Cree and English/Irish ancestry, and the nuances of colonial history are repetitively brought to the fore from across the disciplines—suggesting that Monkman's works are best used as conversation starters for societal issues both past and present.[3] Clearly,

[1] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, [1972] 2009), 26.

[2] For example, see the full references in the bibliography for: Elston 2012, Francis 2011, Katz 2012, McIntosh 2008, Scudeler 2015.

[3] Note my usage of a capital I in Indigenous. This is a respectful approach according to the Indigenous Foundations at the University of British Columbia. When you see a lower case "i" in my text, it is when I am directly citing and/or paraphrasing the work of another scholar. It is also important to note that "Native" is considered to be outdated and less respectful in Canada, but is often applied to Indigenous populations of the United States of America. When I work with a text or scholar who uses "Native," I will use the word along with its context in those parts of my discussion. In general, most scholarship on Indigenous and/or Native studies uses both terms where appropriate or in context. For example, see the introduction to Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgensen, eds., *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011), 2-3. I have refrained entirely from using "Indian" unless it is already written in an original text. "Aboriginal" is currently under scrutiny in Canada, and therefore will not be used in my thesis to describe Indigenous peoples of North America. "Aboriginal Identity & Terminology," accessed June 6 2016, http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/identity/terminology.html.

Monkman's work inspires a very large and wide ranging discussion, however, it is very rare to find material that discusses how the works themselves instigate conversations of sexuality and race, how their chosen forms of media play a part in this process, and what it means that they exist in and as a network. *Up and Coming* is a necessary inclusion within the growing scholarship on Monkman that moves with the works as a way to understand how their specific media forms play a part in the process of politics. This is not an intervention or rerouting of what should be said on Monkman's work, but rather, a thesis that contributes to understanding the socio-historical complexities of the world he has designed for his artist avatar Miss Chief Eagle Testickle by engaging closely with the media used in its fabrication.

I would like to preface my three chapters with a consolidation of the ideas that 1) Kent Monkman's work is a contemporary model of Indigenous storytelling; 2) media as a tool of storytelling exists within a network of artists, viewers, and the meaning that emerges through experiences of the event and this network is a space, a world; and 3) an archaeology of media is an appropriate method of understanding how Monkman's work works. Finding a way to synthesise these arguments demands an analysis of Monkman's work within a sexual cinema of Indigeneity, which includes pornography, paintings, film, video installations, and architecture. It is fitting, considering the artist's tendency to recreate moments from that past, that an archaeology of media is conducted to establish a sense of how networks move with storytelling to create emergent forms of knowing.

Method & Literature Review

The first methodological framework of this thesis is a combination of network theories and the process of worlding. Through these are minor methods that push networks into spatial entities and worlds as architectural fabrics. But first, a reason for turning to the network: an analysis of Indigenous art and film must not simply fall under the rubric of a typical academic methodological structure, but rather move with the resurgence(s) of Indigenous traditions.[4] For Beverly Singer, this includes connecting individuals to the "universe of medicine," arguing "one of the reasons for making films is to heal the ruptures of the past, recognizing that such healing is

[4] To be clear, I am against the adoption of a method toward a goal that a method "should" produce. This is not an original approach (see examples in Bruno; Manning), but is one important to new ways of knowing in the visual arts.

up to the viewer."[5] Here we have the first line within a network, a connection between artist and viewer. This connection is not simply the act of "seeing" something, but a connection between the practice of seeing and the process of healing—media as medicine. Leanne Simpson, however, admits that the tradition of storytelling is lost through media such as film, since a recorded experience is not "emergent."[6] She does not discredit media entirely as a healing practice, she simply suggests that it does not retain its full ability to pass on the oral tradition of Indigenous knowledge through storytelling. She further writes: "we access this knowledge through the quality of our relationships, and the personalized contexts we collectively create. The meaning comes from the context and the process, not the content."[7] Now, our network is much larger, with the connecting lines between artist and viewer entangled among a collective or community that is experiencing the process of storytelling. If mediated methods of storytelling lose a degree of their full potential, how does this make sense with art and film when the collective experience is intended as a method of healing postcolonial atrocities? Certainly, I am not disagreeing with Simpson—quite the opposite. I am drawn in to the concept of storytelling as an evolving form of knowledge that moves and emerges with viewers and their perception(s). I do, however, avoid Simpson's disavowal of content as part of the process. Content is a possible outcome when media and context come together and display a perceivable form or an audible sound. If loss of pure meaning is part of the process when storytelling is mediated, then changing forms of media can be understood as emerging along with experience—piecing new ways of knowing in place of what might be lost—while retaining a traditional practice. In other words, contents become part of contexts, and the process of passing on knowledge retains its flow through emergent experiences, media, and dispersion of Indigenous ways of knowing. A network cannot be encapsulated, and to suggest that there can be a pure meaning continuously transferred disregards the ways that meaning has already been constantly emerging to be perceived in its immediate form.

The movement of/within networks are understood in my thesis as a spatial process. Throughout his research on Indigenous knowledge, Raymond Pierotti addresses the traditions of

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[5] Beverly Singer, *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens: Native American Film and Video* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 3.
[6] Leanne Simpson*, Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 34.
[7] Ibid., 42, 43.

the spatial dimensions of network belief and the substantial amount of distrust the Western scientific systems have had for this form of Indigenous knowledge.[8] Despite what seems to be fundamental oppositions of the forms of knowledge that are valued in Euro-American versus Indigenous cultures, Pierotti explores the curious links between Indigenous and scientific philosophies that deal with "*the flow of materials*."[9] Networks that include filmmakers/artists, viewers, and the various forms of media which enable materials to flow into new methods of storytelling is understood as something that is spatial. Without crediting Indigenous knowledge (a connection that I am here to make), Carl Knappett argues that the flow of materials that come together in a network creates its own space, asserting that this happens because "both humans and things participate in cognition/agency."[10] Agency here is not the anthropocentric definition of a power over one's self: "that agency … is a property of the human individual."[11] My use of agency comes from disciplines such as archaeology and anthropology; disciplines that deal with materiality and meanings that co-emerge with human identities.[12] Mobilising parts of the network as "agents" increases the sense of the network as something that is in constant motion—process and context. Understanding humans and things both as agents within networks makes the spatial dimension clearer, as there is no longer a human perception that can encapsulate, freeze, or attempt to purely come to terms with what the network "is" at a given moment. If it is in flux—in motion—then it is constantly producing space.

Although at this stage it may appear that this is a knotted web of interdisciplinary theories, their intersections are crucial in my argument, and until now, have been left unexplored.

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[8] See: Raymond Pierotti, "Indigenous Concepts of 'Living Systems': Aristotelian 'Soul' Meets Constructal Theory," *Ethnobiology Letters* 6, no. 1 (2015): 81; and *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[9] Pierotti, "Indigenous Concepts of 'Living Systems'," 85.

[10] Carl Knappett, "Communities of Things and Objects: a Spatial Perspective," in *The Cognitive Life of Things: Recasting the Boundaries of the Mind*, ed. Lambros Malafouris and Colin Renfrew (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2010), 81.

[11] Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris, "Material and Nonhuman Agency: An Introduction," in *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, ed. Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris (New York: Springer, 2008), x.

[12] Alfred Gell understands "things" to be social agents capable of participating in the dissemination of knowledge, and Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory attempts to plug these things into societal events through complex human and non-human relations. See Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), and Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). I do not wish to elaborate too heavily on either of these, however they must be acknowledged as agents themselves that have influenced work that is in my study.

Monkman's work exists within an existing world of artistic and filmic production. His process of storytelling is not simply its own network, but is fabricated within the threads of networks already in existence. Within the avenue of film studies, I recognise the potential for a discussion of networks, space, and media that consults the theoretical framework of process. An Indigenous approach to film studies is one that connects viewers, filmmakers, and the various media involved in the practice within an entangled network from which meaning, identity, and value coemerge. This network(ing) creates a space—a process of worlding.

As a way to make sense of the theoretical design(s) and architecting of spatial networks that I consult to make sense of Monkman's work, I turn to the process of worlding. Architecture has often been a difficult part in the marketing of this project. Too often, architecture is reduced to a study of buildings. Architectural theorists and scholars whose work merge with concepts of space, design, and worlding of course do acknowledge that buildings are part of architecture, but that the process of designating space is what builds buildings in concept.
Giuliana Bruno's *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (2007) is consulted throughout my thesis, and her synthesisation of architecture and the arts has been an influential prod in the formation of my research questions. Alberto Pérez-Gómez's *Built Upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics* (2006) moves with architecture as a theory of productivity and healing. This is not only a theory from an architectural scholar that moves beyond the confines of physical structures, but considers the process of building a world to be of enchanted origins. Threads of relation among his work and Indigenous knowledge become present in my third chapter and the conclusion.

Architectural theories flow into theories of worlding. Erin Manning is constantly working with worlding as a process of architecture in motion—utilising bodies, objects, and their relationality in a constantly emerging choreography. Her work utilises the potential in process for a coming(s)-together of physics, art, media, and bodies. Her recent release *The Minor Gesture* (2016) arrived at the perfect time, answering many of the questions and lingering thoughts that I had while finishing the introduction of this project. Manning recognises the complexity of the concept of agency, and how its usage in identity studies is quite different from disciplines that apply it to matter and materiality.[13] She looks to the French concept of *agencement* through the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as a way to explain agency. *Agencement* for Manning

[13] Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 123.

is the movement of thought, the capacity through assemblage for potential.[14] She makes it clear that "assemblage has too often been read as an object or existent configuration, rather than in its potentializing directionality."[15] This is not to say that networks-as-assemblages cannot be physical, but rather that considering their physical form as the containment of their event and form of media would not be appropriate. Architect Thérèse Tierney writes:

> A network, like architecture, is spatialized, yet unlike architecture, it is dynamic and flexible. It is both "there" and not there, existing as a simulated moment in time incapable of stasis and therefore incapable of any full self-evident representation. Thus having no center, no solid structure, the network is nonrepresentational.[16]

Networks function as an assemblage, as a world, because they are continuously operating in a constant flow of context and meaning. This is where I find an applicable dynamism in networks—in that constellations of mediums make visible the various components of a network, and these are in constant flux. Worlding is movement, a continuous process through an assemblage of networked context.

The second methodological framework of this thesis is media archaeology, even though certain scholars would challenge its status as a method. Thomas Elsaesser suggests that media archaeology is often understood as something that a scholar does, rather than something that can be used "as a conceptual tool."[17] This is a direction that my research follows, as multiple issues, past and present, are entangled in Monkman's media. The artist's tendency to remake historical moments opens the necessity to look at this work through a concept of archaeology, comparing objects of the past with his contemporary pieces in their networks of context *and* content. This is not a separate methodological direction, but speaks to the worlding networks and architectural frameworks that thread the chapters together.

Thomas Waugh's early research precedes the current emergence of the field of study that calls itself "media archaeology." Conference papers from as early as 1985 associate archaeology

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[14] Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 123. "Assemblage" in Manning's text is Brian Massumi's translation of *agencement* in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1980] 1987).
[15] Ibid.
[16] Thérèse Tierney, *Abstract Space: Beneath the Media Surface* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 81.
[17] Thomas Elsaesser, "Media archaeology as symptom," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 14, no. 2 (2016): 183.

as a conceptual method in his process of finding and writing about gay erotic images.[18] His 1996 publication *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall* details the efforts of digging into the past as a way to form a community of images that gave and continue to give meaning to gay men. These images for Waugh function in their ability to create a world by giving visibility to homosexual lust, which in turn empowers individuals and their collective groups: agency distributed among human and non-human. This is a process of unearthing media from the past that connects images with sexual identity. Publishing an essay in 1997 entitled "Archaeology and Censorship," Waugh reveals through legal battles that the images he uncovered exerted an impressive amount of power.[19] It was not simply Waugh's reading of the images as visual evidence of gay sexuality that caused a significant amount of distress for publishers and their lawyers—the political contention also resided in the photographs' and films' materiality: fact of matter. Publishing *Lust Unearthed* in 2004 solidified Waugh's archaeological process through media and sexual identity, with the title literally referring to digging up and making visible objects of erotic desire. This required a process of context and making sense of a network that includes production, distribution, and pleasurable viewing of images of men. I have pulled heavily from Waugh's research process as a form of media archaeology, and I am particularly drawn to the way he understands how communities are established through the networks of erotic images that built and continue to build worlds for gay men.

Throughout the thesis, I turn to Giuliana Bruno's architectural understanding of the cultural landscape as a way to move through a process of media archaeology.[20] Bruno established an interdisciplinary model within film studies quite early in her work, and her self-proclaimed " 'archaeological' intertextual approach" through material that she refers to as "an erotics of knowledge" has served as an inspiration for the ways I have approached a thesis in a school of cinema:

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[18] These include: "Historiographic and Theoretical Issues Arising from the Archaeology of the Visual Culture of Male Eroticism" (presentation, Visual Communication Conference, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, May 1985); "The Visual Archaeology of Lust" (presentation, New York University, November 22 2002; and revised version at University of British Columbia, Vancouver, March 21 2003).

[19] Thomas Waugh, "Archaeology and Censorship," in *Suggestive Poses: Artists and Critics Respond to Censorship*, ed. Lorraine Johnson (Toronto: Riverbank Press, 1997), 103.

[20] Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

> My analysis has been designed as a palimpsest. Moving on the edge, through the archaeological site of textual absences and voids, my inquiry traces overlapping textual journeys in a series of "inferential walks" through novels, paintings, photographs, and architectural sites.[21]

Bruno and Waugh have been conducting forms of media archaeology as a method of building media worlds within the discipline of film studies for quite some time. Waugh, however, does not make the same architectural connections as Bruno, which are integral to my research on the spatial dimensions of Miss Chief's world. The cultural landscape is the consistent method that strings together the three very different chapters of this thesis, wherein I position Monkman's work as process, context, *and* content within a much larger matrix of meaning. I best understand how to use the cultural landscape as a method by comparing it to looking closely at a work—very close, as in, it is right in front of you. This is how film is experienced in the classroom: head on, usually with little to no time between the conclusion of the film and jarringly being asked to analyse it. Now, pretend you can zoom out from the moment of observation, noticing that the film is part of a much larger landscape. Its contexts begin to be redistributed among other things, places, and routes, and an existence as a part of a much larger network of media, meaning, and history begins to make sense. My three chapters function as a gradual "zoom-out," beginning first with Monkman's design of a world for Miss Chief, then moving into media from the past to better contextualise his work, and finally concluding with the ability to observe his installations as physical nodes within his media network.

Media archaeology is a process that I use to move around in the cultural landscape, looking at works from the past as objects adjacent to those in the immediately contemporary. This is important while discussing Monkman's work in general, as he is always contributing to the meaning and context of art and films from the past. This in turn effectively attaches his films to the layers of meaning of the original works. This means that works of art are not locked into context through their original method of storytelling, and that their meaning changes after their initial "event." I will refer to the event in this thesis as a process of things coming to form, but it should not be thought of as the thing, object, or experience, as it can be all of these or more, as defined by Erin Manning:

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[21] Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3, 4. She further resituates the need for cinema studies to be better versed in the theories and histories of art and architecture in *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (New York: Verso, 2002), 70, and again in *Public Intimacy*, 5.

> By making everything an event, by emphasizing that there is nothing outside of or beyond the event, the aim is to create an account of experience that requires no omnipresence. The event is where experience actualizes. Experience here is in the tense of life-living, not human life per se, but the more-than human: life at the interstices of experience in the ecology of practices.[22]

This is applicable to how the network itself is difficult to isolate as a "network," with all of its parts in motion and the acknowledgement of loss in mediated distribution of knowledge. The three chapters of this thesis are intended to pick up on some the qualities of what I have observed to be lost meanings of Monkman's work. At the moment of viewership, the object is already an event on its own accord, and the viewer is also an event. The experience between viewer and work is where these events come together in a process—coemerging into an event of spectatorship from the weaving together of their networked worlds.

Until now, there has not been a single written article or book that analyses Kent Monkman's work through the media mix, archaeology, or architecture. Studies on Monkman, although consisting mostly of research in the field that calls itself art history, is interdisciplinary, and can sometimes be unclear as to which disciplines are consulted in respective writings. Despite this spread of content, Monkman's work finds a way to bridge disciplines with language suitable to a general field of identity politics and subversion. Acknowledging this trend, I have tried my hardest to dovetail a broad range of disciplines in each of my chapters, offering a literature review in the flow and content of this thesis. Monkman studies here is surprisingly not a central theme or integral corpus, but rather only comes in for specific information on the artist's life and history of the content and context of the works. One reason I have moved away from the general discussion is that it has become quite repetitive. Another reason, on a rather personal note, is that I feel that scholarship on Monkman is missing something. Having been able to view many of his works firsthand, there are intensities and degrees of sensation that—if accompanied by existing scholarly material—are shot down and bludgeoned by whatever topics are trending in identity studies. There is an entire spectrum of spectatorial sensation that I hope I can begin to put into language with this thesis.

[22] Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 3.

Chapter Breakdowns

The first chapter of this thesis, "Miss Chief Eagle Testickle as Kent Monkman's Artist-Avatar in the Media Mix," explores the concept of Monkman's artist avatar as a transmedia character. I place Miss Chief within Marc Steinberg's theorisation of the media mix, a Japanese character concept with global equivalents that include *convergence* and *transmedia*.[23] In general, the concepts refer to a clustered consolidation of a specific event that manifests on and across various forms of media. When I say event in this context, I am referring to any type of image/figure/thing that becomes a character—the experience that perceives an image across media *as* a character. Although my study is confined to the "event" that is the character of Miss Chief, media convergence is not stuck within the confines of a character. If Manning's event is a continual process of coming to form—"events *create* time and space"[24]—then the media mix is the event of mediums coming together to compose the world of a character. In Monkman's case this is anything on which Miss Chief is represented—be it fabric or the light of a cinematic screen.[25] Convergence is the bricolage that results when you combine, for example, films, fashion, architecture, paint, and even book covers into what Steinberg calls the "Media": the "world" of the character.[26] In other words characters such as Miss Chief are part of a networked event in which various forms of media (which have been designed by Monkman) work together to form a unique world. I consult the architectural model of the cultural landscape as a way to archaeology uncover the forms of media that have influenced Monkman's work, and how Miss Chief's world is situated within and as a network.

The cultural landscape is important as a way to zoom out from a work and observe how it is interwoven among many other things. The potential for the work to exist and become more-than itself is achieved through the matrix: not only a space of creation, but a node within a network of becoming(s) that commands a sense of co-emergence in the creative process. In other words, there is more to the work than can be gleaned through a study of its content. My intention

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[23] Marc Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), vii, viii.
[24] Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 7.
[25] Miss Chief's portraits have even been chosen as the cover of two pivotal academic texts: Driskill et al., *Queer Indigenous Studies*, and Qwo-Li Driskill, Daniel Heath Justice, Deborah Miranda, and Lisa Tatonetti, eds., *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011).
[26] Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix*, xi.

in this chapter is to begin by establishing a network through content that relates to the artist, Monkman, and his avatar, Miss Chief.[27]

The second chapter, "Kent Monkman's Group of Seven Inches: Contemporary Video, Media Archaeology, and Histories of Gay Indigenous Representation in Pornography," picks up where chapter one left off: exploring the fabrics of relation that have preceded, witnessed, and emerged *with* Monkman's art and film. After having established that Miss Chief exists within a media mix, I expand her world to include media beyond Monkman's directive control. Monkman consistently depicts homoerotic and explicit homosexual activity in his work. Looking specifically at his film *Group of Seven Inches: A Titillating Taxonomy of the European Male* (2005, 7:35), I make the argument that he is not only recreating a silent film aesthetic from the early twentieth century, but has also contributed to a history of pornographic media. This is not simply a method of tracing an aesthetic lineage toward Monkman's films or positioning them with a specific history, but rather is intended to expand Miss Chief's world into media of the past by finding qualities of relation. It is in this chapter that I also explore issues of queer sexuality, and the politics of resuscitating racist stereotypes in Indigenous self-representation. Early examples of gay pornographic films that depict gay "Native" men such as *Song of the Loon* and *Dust Unto Dust* are riddled with racist iconography, and despite this, they are the stereotypes that Monkman so often revisits in his own work as a way to bring these flawed histories to light.

The third chapter, "Kent Monkman's Installations: Architectural Erotics and Productive Process," is an extension of the media world that I develop in the first two chapters. However, having explored the virtual qualities that are possible in a cross-platform character universe, I now isolate Monkman's installations as physical nodes within Miss Chief's network. The recreation of tipis that function as both Miss Chief's *boudoir* and a space of cinematic screening provides a physical entry point: the viewer can step inside Miss Chief's world. Rather than just using Monkman's installations as a way to conclude my exploration of the media mix, I position them within Alberto Pérez-Gómez's philosophy of architecture as a product of love.[28] Pérez-Gómez describes the architectural process through ancient understandings of erotic desire and

[27] Ettinger refers to this as "Wit(h)ness-Thing," in that it attests to and is part of emergence. Bracha Ettinger, "Traumatic Wit(h)ness-Thing and Matrixial Co/in-habit(u)ating 1," *Parallax* 5, no. 1 (1999): 92-93.

[28] Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Built upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

production, ultimately concluding that architecture needs to function as a program of healing.[29] At this point, my thesis merges with the existing scholarship on Monkman—accessing the political sentiment present in his work that indeed must be discussed, but as an existing discussion is too often avoiding the perception of materials within Miss Chief's world as tools within an ecology of subversive politics.

[29] Pérez-Gómez, *Built upon Love*, 15.

Figure 0.3 – Miss Chief invites you to come along on a journey. Still from: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.

CHAPTER ONE

Miss Chief Eagle Testickle as Kent Monkman's Artist-Avatar in the Media Mix

If I could turn back time.

– Cher

When the American painter George Catlin chose to depict a Native American ceremonial dance for individuals referred to by French ethnographers as *berdaches*, little did he know that he would spark the formation of a cross-platform media character over 150 years later. Kent Monkman responded to Catlin's derogatory slander of nineteenth-century North American Indian customs by creating a "*berdashe*" character: Miss Chief "Share" Eagle Testickle.[30] His intention in her development was to resituate her image within the same realm of canonical art in which Catlin's painting *Dance to the Berdash* (1835-1837, *fig.* 1.1) resides. Catlin wished to highlight the "disgusting customs" in hopes "that it might be extinguished before it be more fully recorded."[31] As a result of his efforts of erasure, she instead became a star. Monkman revisits Catlin's world through Miss Chief—glorifying the role of the berdashe and inserting the visibility of an identity considered extinguishable to nineteenth-century colonisers *back into* colonial-styled artwork. Her role is always, if not entirely comedic, a campy performance of fame, gender fluidity, and queer sexuality.

While analysing the various media associated with the character of the Japanese television series *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Astro Boy), film and media scholar Marc Steinberg suggests "the term *convergence*—otherwise known as *transmedia* or *cross-media seriality*—refers to the

[30] Note the spelling of Monkman's "berdashe" as an Anglicisation of the French "berdache." I will use "berdashe" only in the context of Monkman's work, and "berdache" while referencing queer Indigenous histories. Also, on rare occasion, Miss Chief's name includes "share," referring to Cher, the pop singer who will be brought up later in this chapter. Previous versions of this thesis included Cher's lyrics as chapter titles that were appropriate to the context. These have been replaced with prosaic titles for rigid simplicity and clarity during the examination process.

[31] George Catlin, "Letter—No. 56," *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, vol. 2 (London: Author, 1841), 215.

Figure 1.1 – George Catlin, *Dance to the Berdash*, 1835-1837. Smithsonian American Art Museum.

ways in which particular texts are made to proliferate across media forms."[32] In recognising the North American expectation of convergence to be synonymous with digital media, Steinberg looks to Japan's *media mix* as an influential precursor to North American convergence and historically theorises the "analog beginnings of transmedia movement."[33] Although Steinberg's case study is rather specific, I would like to propose cross-media seriality and its various synonymic renditions as constituting an appropriate methodological framework in an analysis of Kent Monkman's character-cum-brand. This inquiry could lead me into a much broader research question of looking into Monkman's image as an artist—present for example as a bare-chested

[32] Media scholar Henry Jenkins is a source of Steinberg's definition, who in the 2006 book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, includes "the flow of content across multiple media platforms" with the elucidation of the concept. Quoted in Marc Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), vii.
[33] Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix*, viii.

muscle-hunk riding a motorbike in John Greyson's *Topping* (2000, *fig.* 1.2).[34] The presence of Miss Chief is developed after Monkman's own image. This means that her character-specific platforms are more than simply authorial gesture toward self-representation, but serve to detach his avatar and free her within a media world that has been designed after his own image/identity. Considering Miss Chief as a suitable study under the lens of anime's media mix not only attributes to her a sense of autonomy from Kent Monkman, whose [actual] body is used to realise her image in film and performance, but also offers a strong propulsion towards a transmedia development in which trickster discourse, in this specific case, subversively challenges dominant representations of Indigeneity, sexuality, and race in globalising colonial contexts.

Acknowledging an appropriation of the media mix as an encompassing method of this inquiry, I will begin with a discussion of landscape to form a sense of Kent Monkman's media world. Then, by turning to Richard Dyer's star system as Steinberg has done in his study on *Tetsuwan Atomu*, I explore the ways Miss Chief exists as a character. The purpose of this chapter will be to introduce Monkman's work within the concept of the cultural landscape. Then, I plug Miss Chief into the media mix as a transmedia character.

Figure 1.2 – Still image of Kent Monkman and lucky rider. John Greyson, *Topping*, 2000.

[34] Thomas Waugh, "Notes on Greyzone," in *The Perils of Pedagogy: The Works of John Greyson*, ed. Brenda Longfellow, Scott MacKenzie, and Thomas Waugh (Montréal & Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 2013), 35.

Media Environment as a Cultural Landscape

Giuliana Bruno defines the cultural landscape as a "trace of the memories, the attention, and the imagination of those inhabitant-passengers who have traversed it at different times. It is an intertextual terrain of passage carrying its own representation in the threads of its fabric, weaving it on intersecting screens."[35] Before looking closely at Miss Chief the character, I would like to draw attention to the artist's early oeuvre—itself a cultural landscape of Monkman's work. Born in St. Marys, Ontario in 1965, and later raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Monkman's early recognition began with the experimental dance film *A Nation is Coming* (1996, 24:00).[36]

Figure 1.3 – Still from: Kent Monkman, *A Nation is Coming*, 1996.

Under the most evident visibility of race and culture, sexuality is subtly present, with Thomas Waugh writing: "This sensuous imagining of a ghost dancer's clash with contemporary society is

[35] Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 39.

[36] The dancer, Michael Greyeyes, had the year prior been cast in Clement Virgo's *Rude* and danced amid a radio host who utters: "where the Zulu meets the Mohawk."

homoerotic without being explicitly queer" (*fig* 1.3).[37] Monkman's homosexual subtleties would continue in *Blood River* (2000)—a narrative short about a young hustler and urban Indigenous identities seen through a young Ojibwe woman raised in a suburban foster home. *The Prayer Language* (2000, 2001), his first series of paintings with titles such as *Safe in the Arms of Jesus, Yield Not to Temptation, Oh for a Thousand Tongues*, and *Shall we Gather at the River*, commands a tongue-in-cheek erotic play on Christian hymns. The series refers back to Christian residential schools, and the attempted erasure of Indigenous languages and sexuality in North America.[38] The purpose of this specific montage of images and text serves to problematise histories of erroneous cultural understandings and translation—both in linguistic and visual senses. Monkman's analogous screen [canvas] eventually came into focus, with paintings of Indigenous and European men fucking. These paintings re-vision events of the past, such as *Daniel Boone's First View of the Kentucky Valley* (2001, *fig*. 1.4), wherein Boone, wearing only a cowboy hat and unbuttoned shirt, is lying on his back with legs spread wide in the air. His erotic excitement is evident in his erect dick that is firmly pressing hard against his abdominals while an Indigenous man is fucking him.

As suggested by the work of Martin Lefebvre, Monkman's style of appropriation would be an example of how landscapes are specific to an artist's vision or intention. Defining landscape as "a *space freed from eventhood*" that is both a "pictorial *representation* of a space and at other times [a] real *perception* of a space," Lefebvre further suggests the "movement from setting to landscape through the transformation of the gaze thus charts a passage from the periphery to the centre."[39] Setting refers to the visible spaces of an event. Landscape, on the other hand, is born from setting, but is otherwise employed as an iconological object that exudes meaning as governed through the artist's hermeneutic. Lefebvre is, however, too quick in his attempt to discard eventhood from landscape—a conclusion that might result if one is to dismiss the constant the coming together or process of eventness. Landscape is not simple free of eventhood, but brings together the qualities of setting—constellations of eventhood—that are temporarily displaced in the reformative process that is landscape. The fixed content of existing

[37] Thomas Waugh, *The Romance of Transgression in Canada: Queering Sexualities, Nations, Cinemas* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 473.
[38] I will come back to *Safe in the Arms of Jesus* in my third chapter, where I further explore the gradual emergence of explicit eroticism.
[39] Martin Lefebvre, "Between Setting and Landscape in the Cinema," in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre (New York: Routledge, 2006), 20-22, 27.

landscape art is setting: imbued with meaning from the original painter/filmmaker, but ultimately malleable through Monkman's own authorial gaze when he brings hardcore homosexual activity into the center of the setting, which therefore produces another landscape.

Figure 1.4 – Kent Monkman, *Daniel Boone's First View of the Kentucky Valley*, 2001.

In her analysis of the politics of landscape and Canadian nationhood, Erin Manning exposes landscape paintings as representations of imperialism. This is an image history in line with the first of Lefebvre's interpretive spectrums: a *pure* or "intentional" landscape, in which the artist's desire to paint an unpopulated wilderness was received by viewers as exactly that.[40] Noting the lack of Indigenous people, human involvement in the land, and the depressing concern that it was already difficult to find paintable landscapes void of pollution, Manning

[40] Lefebvre, "Between Setting and Landscape in the Cinema," 30, 31.

proposes an approach of *excess seeing*—placing importance on "that which exceeds the visible."[41] This not only revives Gilles Deleuze's concept of the *hors-champ*—"what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present"—but also brings Lefebvre's second interpretive spectrum of the *impure* or "spectator's" landscape into its full potential for relationally threading the "cultural knowledge and sensibility" of the viewer with the artist's orienting gaze.[42] This involves more than just considering what might rest outside of the limits of the frame, proposing a contemplation of Canadian landscape beyond the containment of meanings: either as visual tools to establish a sense of Canadian sovereignty, or as documents in exposing art-based colonial tactics of attempting to erase Indigenous visibility.

Figure 1.5 – Kent Monkman, *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter*, 2002. National Gallery of Canada.

[41] Erin Manning, *Ephemeral Territories: Representing Nation, Home, and Identity in Canada* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 11.
[42] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1983] 1986), 15, 16.

To proceed, Manning revisits Mikhail Bakhtin's "notion of the chronotope, which highlights the dialogical movement between space and time inherent in all representations."[43] Bakhtin writes "a locality is the trace of an event, a trace of what had shaped it. Such is the logic of all local myths and legends that attempt, through history, to make sense of space."[44] On this note, Manning posits:

> Landscapes can be regarded as chronotopes: they are places and representations where social, historical, and geographical conditions alert us to the political implications of an encounter between history and geography. Located as a chronotopic event, the landscape assumes a vocabulary that focuses on the *effects* of its representation in time and space—that is, on the ongoing historical developments that alternately anchor and destabilize the "natural harmony" of a given landscape.[45]

If the depiction of vast purportedly empty spaces has been used to signify a concept of a nation, contemporary works that reimagine the setting perpetuate the intention to establish a sense of national identity. Looking at landscape as a chronotope enables the visualisation of peripherality that is perceived as absence in certain settings. A chronotopic approach is not only present in Miss Chief's media world that reworks and inhabits landscapes of Canadian and American history, but is also seen when Monkman ingrains her activity within the histories of other artists. The well-endowed Indigenous figure from *Superior* becomes finally clear in *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter* (2002, *fig*. 1.5), wherein Monkman has synthesised the settings of two Paul Kane paintings: *Assiniboine Hunting Buffalo* (1851, *fig.* 1.6), and *"Half-Breeds Running Buffalo," Plains Métis* (c. 1846, *fig.* 1.7). In *Portrait*, the Indigenous hunter with bow flexed and arrow aimed at an already pierced buffalo in *Assiniboine* is replaced with a muscle-bound man wearing a pink loincloth, chest plate, stiletto moccasins, and the headdress only seen as a silhouette in *Superior*—aiming a bow and arrow not at a cow of the prairie, but towards the firm, open buttocks of a European assless-chaps-wearing-open-shirted hunter. *Half-Breeds* depicts an assumed mixed-race hunter who has fallen off his steed, and lies beside his gun—with other hunters around, but alas, no sign of the elusive villain. The three images move through and into each other, with the history of the ambiguously-gendered hunter buttressed by Kane's depictions. *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter* in 2002 marks the beginning of Miss Chief, and certainly serves as a clairvoyant image to a continued aesthetic of a space/time-travelling character.

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[43] Manning, *Ephemeral Territories*, 13.
[44] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 189.
[45] Manning, *Ephemeral Territories*, 13.

Figure 1.6 – Paul Kane. Left: *Assiniboine Hunting Buffalo*, c. 1851-1856. National Gallery of Canada.

Figure 1.7 – Paul Kane, "*Half Breeds Running Buffalo*," *Plains Métis*, 1846. Royal Ontario Museum.

Star

Fortunately, George Catlin and national landscapes were not the only inspirational drives that birthed Miss Chief, with one of her most visible sources being the stage, screen, and singing diva, Cher. And at that, it is not simply just any Cher, but the Indigenous persona played by Cher while boasting a quantum of Cherokee blood for the marketing of her song "Half-Breed." The single was released in the summer of 1973, with the music promo (early version of what come to be called "music video") airing on the premiere of *The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour*'s fourth season on September 12th of the same year on CBS. Cher would not only don the glittering beaded loincloth, chest piece, and mighty trailing headdress on television, but would incorporate the regalia-dependant image during staged performances of the song. The image Monkman chose for Miss Chief is indeed so strikingly similar to Cher's aesthetic that if historians in future millennia are to confront images of both divas, it will be easy to consider that Monkman plugged Miss Chief into Cher's history instead of Cher having had an influence on Miss Chief's image. The ambivalent anachronism used to form Miss Chief's image—including Cher's celebrity status and superficially uncritical style of appropriation—propelled Monkman's avatar into temporally-discordant visual cultures and signalled the galaxy of mainstream star systems which his character would enter.

Figure 1. 8 – Still of Miss Chief's kiss for Winnetou. Kent Monkman, *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010.

Leo Braudy, in *The Frenzy of Renown*, breaks down fame in four elements that work together in a process of stardom: "a person and an accomplishment, their immediate publicity, and what posterity has thought about them ever since."[46] Published a few years prior in 1979, Richard Dyer's *Stars* breaks down fame through four similar groupings of conveniently titled "media texts" that relate to Braudy's writing, but are otherwise consolidated in the person: "*promotion*, *publicity, films* and *commentaries* / *criticism*."[47] Promotion, the "referring to texts which were produced as part of the deliberate creation/manufacture of a particular image or image-context for a particular star," is easily constructed and applicable when considering Monkman who includes a biography and descriptions of individual works on his own website.[48] Monkman's publicity differs from promotion in that it is not his own "*deliberate* image making," yet media sources such as *Huffington Post*, *The Walrus*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Canadian Art*, *Macleans*, and *Fuse*, which boast articles and interviews on his work that are otherwise easily accessible through quick online search engines have been selectively curated and published on his website. Commentaries and criticism on Monkman and Miss Chief are plenty, with a range of theses, books, essays, and journal articles devoted to the artist, with little to no mention of anything other than his painted works. For the purpose of this chapter, the promotion, publicity, and commentary/criticism have been folded together throughout the text so that I can explore Miss Chief's media world more extensively.

Preceding the years of online fame and instant celebrity games, Dyer's positioning of film as a catalyst in the making of a star might seem quite out-dated. Regardless, Monkman still steps forward in the category, not only presenting Miss Chief on film—acknowledging her as actress in the credits and not himself—but recomposing her fame as a silver-screen starlet from the silent era in the Miss Chief Trilogy: *Group of Seven Inches* (2005), *Shooting Geronimo* (2007), and *Robin's Hood* (2007). On Dyer's star system, Juan Suárez writes:

> Stars embodied ideal images, complexities, and contradictions attendant on being and acting in the world. The three main arenas where they project their influence are notions of public and private behaviour [and] attitudes toward sexuality and gender roles.[49]

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[46] Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 15.
[47] Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1979), 68-72.
[48] See www.kentmonkman.com.
[49] Juan A. Suárez, *Bike Boys, Drag Queens, and Superstars: Avant-Garde, Mass Culture, and Gay Identities in the 1960s Underground Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 246.

There is clearly an arena that functions as a matrix for Miss Chief—a boundless amount of historical possibilities relationally threaded together and accessible for media manifestation.

She is present in other works that are also intended for art exhibition, but have less direct reference to cinematic histories in their media form. *Dance to the Berdashe* (2008), a five-channel video installation screened on pelts, is a direct engagement with Catlin's painting mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. Monkman is working with the media texts surrounding Catlin's stardom in the art world—offering criticism of Catlin's misogynistic notch in history making and "re-imagining a lost honour dance" by establishing Miss Chief as a "powerful and glamorous icon."[50] Remixing the images from *Dance to the Berdashe* with scenes cut from Harald Reinl's German Western-film adaptations of nineteenth-century writer Karl May's *Winnetou* series (1963-1965), Monkman made *Dance to Miss Chief* in 2010 (*fig.* 1.8).[51] Again, the video serves to re-appropriate Catlin's setting within Monkman's own cultural landscape. The video is intended to put Miss Chief's stardom on stage, with the online description reading:

> Move over J.Lo and Cher! Miss Chief Eagle Testickle has a new sexy video of her club track: Dance to Miss Chief — a playful critique of German fascination with North American "Indians" that is guaranteed to make you want to get up and shake your booty! This remix of contemporary and vintage footage celebrates Miss Chief's on-screen romance with leading man, Winnetou, fictitious "Indian" from Karl May's German Westerns.

Playing on Cher's image is a method of immediately appropriating glamour and fame for Miss Chief, but also pulls from 1960s-derived underground gay contexts of camp and drag, with *Dance to Miss Chief* easily translatable as a performance by a contemporary circuit diva on a club stage. Her use of vogueing (*fig.* 1.9) brings with it the hyper-stardom of Madonna and her controversial use of a style of movement that began among gay men and drag queens in the 1960s United States. Lucas Hilderbrand offers two different histories of vogueing—both considered *the* history in their respective circles: an oral history of a fashion-model-invoking expression "Give me *Vogue*" used by black and Puerto Rican queens in the back room at the Stonewall in New York, and the much more accepted history in the ball circuit of a movement style that was called " 'presentation': emphasising performance and poses," that began in the

[50] From the website of the filmmaker: http://urbannation.com/films.php?film=dance-to-the-berdashe
[51] English titles of the *Winnetou* trilogy are *Apache Gold* (1963), *Last of the Renegades* (1964), and *The Desperado Trail* (1965).

Figure 1. 9 – Still of vogueing. Kent Monkman, *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010.

Rikers Island prison complex years before the dance would appropriate the name of the fashion magazine.[52]

Although critic Susan Sontag proposed a definition of camp in her 1964 essay "Notes on Camp," she erased the concept's attachment to its original gay discourse. Moe Meyer argues "camp cannot and should not be defined," but does acknowledge identifiable traits of camp *that change and move with time and place*: "Camp is political; Camp is solely a gay discourse; Camp embodies a specifically gay cultural critique."[53] Camp's political affiliations is present in many of Thomas Waugh's writings, wherein camp is often seen as an intermedial potential between gay rights movements and oppressive state legislation.[54] If it is an expression of intermediality, camp is then a gesture, Giorgio Agamben's "exhibition of a mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such. It allows the emergence of the being-in-a-medium of human beings and thus it opens the ethical dimension for them."[55] In *Dance to Miss Chief*, mediality is explicitly

[52] Lucas Hilderbrand, *Paris is Burning* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2013), 90, 91.
[53] Moe Meyer, *An Archaeology of Posing: Essays on Camp, Drag, and Sexuality* (Madison, WI: Macater Press, 2010), 51.
[54] See Thomas Waugh, *The Romance of Transgression in Canada* (2006), and *The Fruit Machine* (2000) in the bibliography.
[55] Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 58.

clear: Miss Chief's scenes from her video installation are cut between shots of Reini's films, so that her dance stage is central, and the actors in the films are dancing for her as a celebration to her marriage to Winnetou (*fig.* 1.10). This use of a montage aesthetic does not simply create a third element out of two that already exist, but politically mediates peripherality through new developments of space in Miss Chief's media world.

Figure 1.10 – Example of insertion in original text. Kent Monkman, *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010.

In a display of extreme camp, Miss Chief is present in the commercial-esque video *Mary* (2011, *fig.* 1.11), pulling from the aesthetics of a hair-care or makeup advertisement. The video stages the Prince of Wales' visit to Montréal in 1860 to inaugurate the "Eighth Wonder of the World," the Victoria Bridge.[56] Accompanied by Wagner's "Liebestod" from *Tristan und Isolde*, Miss Chief approached the seated prince, removes his shoes and socks, and proceeds to embrace her inner Mary Magdalene by washing his feet with her (black-from-mascara) tears. The intercut texts read: "We had an agreement. / I agreed to share, not surrender. / How could you break your promise?" With the end of the video reading:

[56] Todd Porterfield, "History Painting and the Intractable Question of Sovereignty," in *Interpellations: Three Essays on Kent Monkman*, ed. Michèle Thériault (Montréal: Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2012), 91.

> Since the signing of the first Treaties in the 18th century, the First Nations and the Crown had differing interpretations on what the Treaties meant. First Nations did not view the Treaties as surrender, but as sharing of resources intended to protect their cultures, languages and the land they had traditionally occupied.
> Despite attempts to extinguish these rights, Treaties remain the building blocks for the future of the relationship between First Nations and the rest of Canada. However, the ability of the First Nations to exercise governance over their lands and people remains hampered by the paternalistic confines of the Indian Act.

Figure 1.11 – Still of Miss Chief washing the feet of the Prince of Wales in Montréal in 1860. Kent Monkman, *Mary*, 2011.

Both Dyer's star and Steinberg's character "function on the principle of recognition; they are effective only so long as they are recognized."[57] The word "recognition" not only evokes a process of seeing a memorised image, but also suggests that Monkman is using the image of Miss Chief to inspire a *recognition of* Indigenous struggles within colonial histories. Further, the video pulls peripheral imagery from identities and histories into a gesture of campy political history telling that is not only for José Esteban Muñoz "a strategy of representation, but also a

[57] Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix*, 68.

mode of enacting self against the pressures of the dominant culture's identity-denying protocols."[58] The son of Queen Victoria's presence in North America was not only relevant for the inauguration of a bridge that was both "a symbol and goal of British imperial strength," but was an effort of reinforcing national identity through a "[knitting] together of the empire."[59] This was done in spite of differences among immigrants and "twelve petitions outlining violations of previous agreements on land rights and sovereignty" that had already been issued by Aboriginal organisations for the Crown's response.[60] If Dyer's film category in regards to Miss Chief has anything to say, it is that Miss Chief's *vehicle* propels her into stardom through cross-temporal engagements—wherein homoeroticism and camp representations serve as a continuum along which an assortment of scenarios can unfold. The events selected by Monkman for his films and videos do not show vast landscapes of the Canadian West, but they continue to refigure settings from visual cultures of North American history. The settings of his films and videos are landscapes at the level of lived experiences, chronotopes that reshape the settings in which Miss Chief manifests. She appears in forms of media that are intended to appear old and new, which means that she is both a time traveller and a shape shifter. Because her star image is one that utilises the concept of camp, there is an unfolding of a sense of intermediality, a space between the movement—between time(s). Although Miss Chief as a star can be linked to the body of Monkman through his performance of her, he is not the one who can travel through time. In order to begin to make sense of camp/intermediality as integral component of Miss Chief's media mix, I will turn to the concept associated with the star that is detached from the body of the human performer: the character. Through the character's ability to traverse space/time/media, intermediality is better understood as a connected betweenness. Camp is therefore a gesture toward understanding the connections between the media in which Monkman creates Miss Chief's image. The various media are connected through the fabrication of a character's world.

[58] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 120.
[59] Todd Porterfield, "History Painting and the Intractable Question of Sovereignty," In *Interpellations: Three Essays on Kent Monkman*, ed. Michèle Thériault (Montréal: Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2012), 91.
[60] Ibid., 92.

Trickster Character

Offering his reader a case study of the four media texts by analysing Jane Fonda, Dyer establishes the concept of "*structured polysemy*: the multiple but finite meanings and effects that a star image signifies."[61] The concept is provided to prevent a sense of rigid lineation in the process of starness, although we must acknowledge the applicability of Bakhtin's chronotope through "a *complex totality*" inseparably synthesised with "a *chronological dimension*."[62] Steinberg finds structured polysemy to work with his study of characters in that "they possess multiple different meanings and traverse meaning contexts."[63] With Dyer's study being so closely linked to the physical body of the actor, he refrains from allowing infinite possibilities to emerge from the multiplicity of the star's image in films and other media. In other words, the actor's body creates a limit to the potential of what can be imagined in the star's world. However, through Richard DeCordova's writing on paratextual indexicality of a star's identity that references both character and actor, Steinberg suggests that characters seemingly differ from stars "because there is only the produced body (the character) and no producing body (the actor)."[64] This creates an interesting moment for Miss Chief. She is without a doubt connected to Monkman through his body as a form of media, but she exists as her own star and character—complete with her own Facebook account.

Miss Chief as a Character within a star system becomes somewhat dishevelled with this outlook. Kent Monkman as the artist is indeed dressed as Miss Chief for his performances and film, but this is not the typical actor/star with a character in a particular film or series. There is an autobiographical account emerging in the development of her world, as Monkman is designing Miss Chief's character. Instead of being one of Monkman's acted roles, she is better articulated as his avatar in a media world, and a separate character with her own respective identity. Monkman's body is present in performance and film, and therefore "draws the spectator into a specific path of intertextuality that extends outside of the text as a formal system."[65] What then, of a character whose identity is both one and more-than one on different occasions, whose star-

[61] Dyer, *Stars*, 72.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix*, 67, 68.
[64] Ibid., 68.
[65] Richard DeCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 19-20.

based aesthetic is pulled into the bodily realm of the artist, Monkman, and catapulted into the virtual heavens of Miss Chief's character universe?[66] For this, I return to my use of the word Trickster in regards to Miss Chief's media mix.

Trickster discourse in contemporary aboriginal art acknowledges a "comic spirit at the centre of Native cultural identity."[67] Artist Cheryl L'Hirondelle, in a discussion with Joseph Nayhowtow and Richard William Hill, agree on two different views within Cree society of a similar character: the *wîhcikôhkân*, "the sacred backward clown," and the Trickster, the *wîsahkêcâhk*, "who's like a teacher, or noble friend."[68] The role of both is often highlit in similar instances, with trickery, deceit, and comedy, and morality considered repugnant to Christian dogma as effective tools with which to teach. With no gender in the Cree language, there is an immediate agreement that the Trickster's gender is unknown. However, the character is sometimes understood as gendered in certain stories, such as when he is male and tricks his way into a sexual engagement with his daughter for the purpose of procreation.[69] Jonathan Katz writes:

> The fact is that Monkman is less interested in history than historicity—not what actually happened, but how we tell what happened. And it is in the telling of the past, as opposed to the past itself, that we can restore, correct, and ultimately rewrite history sensitive to its silences and repressions.[70]

For Katz, Monkman's motive in his practice is to avoid engaging with the powers in place that govern processes of decision, morality, and subjectivity, while at the same time acknowledging that histories have been written, painted, and filmed according to specific racist systems. It is for these reasons that the general scholarship on Monkman's work focuses on socio-historical

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[66] I am using Erin Manning's concept of the *more-than* throughout this thesis as potential beyond what the object/event/occasion seems to contain in its breadth of becoming and experience. Note, for example, that "more-than one" versus "more-than-one" implies a quality beyond a statement of surplus quantity. "More-than-one" implies that there are more than one. "More-than one" implies that there is one, and it is more-than itself. *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 24.

[67] Allan J. Ryan, *The Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Native Art*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 4; The coyote or trickster, the fool in Europe: Jonathan D. Katz, " 'Miss Chief is always interested in the latest European fashions'," in *Interpellations: Three Essays on Kent Monkman*, ed. Michèle Thériault (Montréal: Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2012), 20, 21.

[68] Richard W. Hill, Cheryl L'Hirondelle, and Joseph Nayhowtow, "You Are Never Just One Thing in One Place: Tricksters and Contrary Spirits," in *The World Upside Down*, ed. Richard W. Hill, Sylvie Gilbert, and Doris Cowan (Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, 2008), 46.

[69] Hill et al., "You Are Never Just One Thing in One Place," 52.

[70] Katz, " 'Miss Chief is always interested in the latest European fashions'," 20.

aspects which I agree are integral to understanding his work, but do not explore the many peripheral facets.

L'Hirondelle concludes the discussion by stating that *wîsahkêcâhk* "describes a being that has a foot on those elements that constitute the earth but also a foot in the spirit world. And that need to remind yourself that you never are just one thing in one place."[71] Gerald McMaster further notes the various forms in which Monkman uses the Trickster: often present as Miss Chief, but also in other characters of his art such as Raven in *Icon for a New Empire* (2007), who is cleverly replacing Jean-Léon Gérôme's cupid in *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1890).[72] I am not trying to suggest that upon closer inspection all characters are a form of Trickster—although the relation seems to be thickening. What I am trying to encircle is the quality of ambivalence in both the star system and the character's media mix that becomes increasingly clear when the Trickster side of Miss Chief is exposed.

Steinberg acknowledges three factors that separate the concept of the character from the concept of the star: the character's voice, the hand of the artist and the aesthetics of drawing, and the "circulation across media types."[73] These all in some way exhibit indexical traces of the character's human counterpart(s). Considering his corpus of work from this perspective, Kent Monkman is present in Miss Chief, and Miss Chief in Kent Monkman. These factors of separation work as peripheral agents in the double bodying of a character, the collapsing of space between actor, star, and character. A new problem arises with this conclusion, as most characters' affiliated human bodies are not recognized, which renders them no longer congruent with Dyer's star system. The media mix is, although essential for beginning to understand the world that Monkman has designed for Miss Chief, not an entirely efficient platform for the analysis of such a character. Star and character theories do not adequately explain personas such as Miss Chief. She straddles both definitions, using her star status and character malleability together as Monkman's artist avatar—threading his politically driven intentions also into the amalgam.

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[71] Hill et al., "You Are Never Just One Thing in One Place," 53.
[72] The image of cupid will come up in chapter three, and should be well noted here as a point of connection. Gerald McMaster, "The Geography of Hope," in *The Triumph of Mischief*, curated by David Liss and Shirley Madill (Victoria, BC: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 2008), 98, 100.
[73] Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix*, 68, 69.

Having opened this chapter with Bruno's contextualising usage of the cultural landscape, I was able to "zoom out" and examine Monkman's work across space/time and materiality. In a 1991 issue of the *Journal of Architectural Education*, Dell Upton proposed the usage of *cultural landscape* as a remedy for what he perceived to be the limited approaches being used in the research of architecture:

> This history takes into account builders and buildings, but it is concerned with construction only on the way to construing. Its focus is the human experience of its own landscape, rather than the relationship of maker and object. It attempts to encompass as many modes of perception as possible and, equally important, the mental categories through which perception is interpreted…Thus, a working definition of *cultural landscape* emphasizes the fusion of the physical with the imaginative structures that all inhabitants of the landscape use in constructing and construing it.[74]

Upton repurposed the term cultural landscape from a previous reference of pertinence to heritage sites—retaining the indication of "heritage" as bearing an archaeology of histories attached to the present in his definition. Although I began by discussing landscapes in a very literal sense, the point was to begin to provide a cultural landscape around Miss Chief within the politically charged context of Kent Monkman's work.

The cultural landscape approach provides the material from which to develop a consideration of the character as having been created through Monkman's political intentions. Read against the grain, everything within her world exhibits intertextual traces of colonial memories and histories of oppression against Indigenous and queer lives. Although I drew a rather distinct trajectory in the way Miss Chief emerged in his practice, this history has emerged from a much larger matrix of cultural production. With this in mind, it would be appropriate to look to a new conceptual synergy of media beyond cross-platform character development. Miss Chief is both a character and the body of a star, a human actor and a painted figure, embroidered on a range of textile objects and (through Monkman) architect of her own universe. The cultural landscape moves with and beyond Monkman's intention in Miss Chief's initial development. Having now established Miss Chief as a cross-temporal character, a consideration of her world will extend to media that shares in relational qualities, as it quickly becomes obvious that the associated media within her world is much broader than the forms in which she immediately manifests. The following chapter will archaeologically dig through the cultural landscape of

[74] Dell Upton, "Architectural History or Landscape History?" *Journal of Architectural Education* 44, no. 4 (August 1991): 198.

Monkman's work and further investigate how Miss Chief's transmedia universe extends beyond the artist's design.

Figure 1.12 – Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief's Praying Hands (Red)*, 2016. Silicone Rubber, 4.5 x 10.5 inches.

CHAPTER TWO

Kent Monkman's *Group of Seven Inches*: Contemporary Video, Media Archaeology, and Histories of Gay Indigenous Representation in Pornography

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> If our political history is one of courage, self-realization, and mobilization, our cultural history is one of desire—of the slow emergence of a concealed and repressed love, of its acknowledgment and declaration, of its individual and collective fulfillment, and of its sharing. If we are to understand the dynamics and the challenges of our present cultural and political place, we must reanimate this history of images forgotten, confiscated, and denied. It was hard to imagine love in those years; imagining hard was an act of both revolt and community. Recycling those hard imaginings from our past may stir today's soft, wounded imaginings.[75]
>
> – Thomas Waugh

In Miss Chief's media world, I have established that Monkman spelunks the caverns of history and humorously refigures historical accuracy. These contemporary manipulations are consistent with images of masculine eroticism and same-sex desire. Gay fantasies of the "American Indian" are not unique to Monkman's work, but to my knowledge, invisible within the interpenetrating scholarship on sexuality and Indigenous identity. This chapter, and in extension, entire thesis, is an entry in that direction: exploring aspects of Monkman's films within a sexual cinema of Indigeneity. This must begin to include the pornography that is too often disregarded for the sake of puritanical residue within the academy. Moving along with the theme of Miss Chief existing within a world across media that Monkman has designed, I will now make connections with past media in an archaeological sense—where I find connections with historical films and texts with which Monkman's work is associated.

For architectural historian Cynthia Hammond, looking with artwork as a starting point to enter a cultural landscape enables new scholarship to form on visual culture "in which specific

[75] Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 5.

Figure 2.1 – Still from: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.

works are mined for their social, political or symbolic values." [76] Hammond's proposal to consider contemporary cultural objects and events as agents that contribute a new layer to very specific histories is easily applicable to Monkman's cinematic works. However, films alone cannot historicize the subjects in question, just as Hammond's spatial engagements remain on top of a hidden archaeological pile if there is no further inquiry. Considering the broader possibilities that one can entertain through Hammond and Bruno's shared archaeological approach to cultural production, which cinematic histories can be considered ancestral to Monkman's media? Which traces have been left that allow us as researchers to investigate the clues and cues in Monkman's images, and which histories are considered legitimate in the formation of his media world? Isolating *Group of Seven Inches* (2005, *fig* 2.1) out of the Miss

[76] Cynthia Hammond, *Architects, Angels, Activists and the City of Bath, 1765-1965: Engaging with Women's Spatial Interventions in Buildings and Landscape* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 122.

Chief Trilogy, I will demonstrate how Monkman's filmmaking practice anachronistically engages with cinematic histories of Indigeneity and sexuality. First, I will open by discussing theories of perception regarding concepts of reality—a conversation that holds considerable value within the discipline of history. Then, I dive into cues and points of reference to expand Miss Chief's media world beyond the frames of Monkman's design. The objective of this chapter is to describe how Monkman's work exists within an already existing and constantly moving network of objects and things. This network has points of interpenetration, and these form connections of relativity to other objects in a time/space continuum. The broad objective of this media archaeology is to continue the concept of the media world that I developed in chapter one. However, I will expand Miss Chief's universe to include media that she has never been directly a part of.

Creating a Media World with Historical Objects

Group of Seven Inches reverses the history of ethnographic documentary, placing Miss Chief on the screen as an expert anthropologist who studies the wild and mysterious European male. The Group of Seven were Anglophone painters in Canada during the interwar period of the Twentieth Century. Their landscape and wilderness paintings were fundamental in the formation of an image of the Canadian nation; still a newly founded country having only been established in 1867.

The film is shot in black and white, and has been stylized to appear as if it were a late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century silent film. She confronts two loin-cloth-wearing men while riding a white horse on a paved country road, and convinces them to follow her back to her studio. The studio is Canadian Group of Seven "painter Tom Thomson's shack, which had been removed from its original location and rebuilt—plank by plank—on the gallery grounds and dressed with period props to make it look like an authentic studio."[77] Here, she dresses them with appropriate "European" costumes and props to make a scientific study, with narrative texts intercut among the scenes from the journals of George Catlin and Paul Kane:

> The European male will live forever in my pictures as living monuments of a noble race.

[77] Mike Hoolboom and Kent Monkman, "Miss Chief," in *Practical Dreamers: Conversations with Movie Artists*, ed. Mike Hoolboom (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2007), 49.

> I have procured authentic examples of their costumes for the amusement and instruction of future ages.
>
> It has become my life's work to make a record of them before they are obliterated completely.
>
> I never romanticize my subjects. I paint each sitter with profound feelings for his… …individuality.

Monkman has stated that it was next to impossible for the early twentieth-century ethnographers to find "authentic" Natives since European clothes had already been normalized among them in the nineteenth century. On the intertitles in *Group of Seven Inches*, Monkman says "I performed a simple reversal, making the white man the subject of these texts, demonstrating the absurdity of reducing an entire race to these maxims."[78]

Figure 2.2 – Still from: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.

During one of Monkman's artist residency's at the McMichael Gallery in Ontario, Edward Curtis's film *In the Land of the Headhunters* (1914) was being screened as a history

[78] Hoolboom and Monkman, "Miss Chief," 48.

lesson in their First Nations gallery. Curtis is notoriously famous for his photography and films of "a dying race," staging traditional clothing and ceremonial regalia on the bodies of already-modern Natives to supposedly document "authentic" Indigeneity in America.[79] This was the moment Monkman decided to bring Miss Chief's painted image to life, first with the performance *The Taxonomy of the European Male*, and its cinematic version: *Group of Seven Inches*.[80] Monkman challenges the concept of documentary as the recording of an actual fact, and reshoots a contemporaneous cinematic event that appears to have time-travelled from the past to the future. This may seem redundant at first. Why reveal the forged identity of historical tales and then repeat the same aesthetic of excess? How does the fabrication of a new history engage with, criticise, and effectively serve as activism in contemporary Indigenous politics? For Brian Massumi, an event that has passed is immediately part of the virtual, as it is only understood through abstracted perceptions that are intended to sense the moment now memorised.[81] Nearly a decade later, he redirects this concept within the context of activism in politically charged art:

> The virtual cannot be understood as a "space" of potential—it is, after all, *event* potential. It cannot be treated as a realm apart without being entirely denatured as a speculatively-pragmatically useful concept. It is in no way an idealist concept. And it is in no way in opposition with actualism. The activist philosophy advanced here is in a way a thoroughgoing actualism, taking the term actual at its etymological word: "*in act.*" For activist philosophy, everything real gets into the act, and everything in the act is real according to its own mode of activity.[82]

If history could only be told one way, and there was indeed a single truth to be screened in documentary, then Monkman's Miss Chief trilogy would only be useless fluff. There is no actual without the virtual, no filming of the past without staging its events. Instead of simply attempting to correct which histories are being told and how, he designs a media universe for Miss Chief and develops a history through her encounters. His fiction is also a documentary, a visualisation

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[79] Lee Schweninger writes on Kent Mackenzie's use of Curtis photographs in his film *The Exiles* (1961) as a way of juxtaposing the stereotypes of "American Indians" with the Indigenous actors on a Los Angeles movie set. *Imagic Moments: Indigenous North American Film* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 37.

[80] Here, the body of the artist acts as the medium from which a character's image can be fabricated. Hoolboom and Monkman, "Miss Chief," 48.

[81] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 30, 31.

[82] Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 16.

of what has been left unsaid: a moment has been staged—albeit leaning heavily toward the virtual—to form *a telling of* history.

Figure 2.3 – Still from: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.

Documentary filmmaking acknowledges the spectrum of the virtual and actual in its discipline, with Bill Nichols stating "the bond between photographic, video, or digital images and what they represent can be extraordinarily powerful even if it can also be entirely fabricated."[83] "Fabricated" as a concept is not synonymous with fictitious. For Bruno, fabric and fabrication tend toward worlding, moving from Gilles Deleuze's philosophy to address the folding and unfolding processes that take place in design.[84] This design is indeed architectural,

[83] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, [2001] 2010), xvi.
[84] Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 16.

with moments of the fabric's perception made possible when it converges with the nexus of spectators: "a philosophy of *becoming* that is capable of rendering the transformation of matter and movements of the mind as interrelated phenomena"[85] Fabricated documentaries are real. Monkman knows this, and this is why the documentary on Curtis playing at the McMichael gallery is a cause of frustration. The retelling of histories may not be accurate, but the history told becomes something real in the world and has power as it exists regardless of the supposed "truths" that are misrepresented. Further, it is not simply Miss Chief's world designed by Monkman, but rather Miss Chief is an embodiment of Monkman who physically began performing her shortly after introducing her painted image in his work. Amelia Jones describes this authorial subjectivity as a "simulacral world [that] always leaks. Something always escapes the image (the image is, again, *never enough* to contain the bodies it renders)."[86] Leaking indeed establishes that worlds are not Euclidean spheres. Although there is a very specific cultural landscape tied to Miss Chief's universe that I discussed in chapter one, Monkman's recurring themes of sexuality and Indigeneity extend beyond the artist's own work. Conducting an archaeological dig through media, the next section of this chapter is intended to better contextualise the immediately central figures of Monkman's leaky, queer self-projection in *Group of Seven Inches*: Miss Chief and her hot young men.

Although the first chapter went directly into the media world of Miss Chief—pulling in selected historical points referenced in her cultural landscape—the topic of her image is one that requires further exploration on the relevance of her two-spirit identity. Two-spirit discourse is a relatively new phenomenon, having developed at the same time as queer theory around 1990.[87] During the Third International Gathering of American Indian and First Nations Gays and Lesbians in Monkman's hometown of Winnipeg, there was an expressed desire to develop an alternative to the term *berdache*, which had previously been the word to describe non-heterosexual persons in the previous years of ethnographic research.[88] For the community of late twentieth-century LGBT Indigenous peoples, the term was loaded with colonial usage through

[85] Bruno, *Public Intimacy*, 15, 16, 22.
[86] Amelia Jones, *Self/Image: Technology, Representation and the Contemporary Subject* (London: Routledge, 2006), 23.
[87] David Halperin, "The Normalization of Queer Theory," *Journal of Homosexuality* 45, no. 2-4 (2003): 339.
[88] Qwo-Li Driskill, "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies," *GLQ* 16, no. 1-2 (2010): 72.

the French, and rather limited for the experiences of sexuality and gender. Published in 1986, Walter Williams' *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* is an in-depth anthropological study of sexuality that, while focusing primarily on the *berdache* of the western United States, includes a range of gender and sexual diversities in varying Indigenous cultures of the American continents. Contemporary two-spirit scholars and activists have continued Williams' "argument that sexuality should not define a person's identity," focusing on his praise for American Indian cultures not simply as a study of sexuality, but *as a critique of* Western culture's views on sexuality.[89] Published during the same period as the seminal texts that would open a queer and two-spirit discourse in the academy, the usage of the term *berdache* occurs simply within his pedagogy as a scholar of anthropology.

It is clear, however, that even at the time Williams was writing his book, the word and the identity-figure to whom it was applied were already rife with limits: "The word originally came from the Persian *bardaj*, and via the Arabs spread to the Italian language as *bardasso* and to Spanish as *bardaxa* or *bardaje* by the beginning of the sixteenth century. About the same time the word appeared in French as *bardache.*"[90] The Persian term refers to young men who were sodomised, referencing the myth of the rape of Ganymede by Zeus as a synonym. "The dictionaries, however, make it clear that both *bardache* and *ganimede* refer to the passive homosexual partner. The French word *bougre* was used for the active male partner, akin to the English words *bugger* and *bougie man.*"[91] Therefore, in Williams' research, the berdache were only male-born people who took on a feminine identity and style of dress that classified them within their communities as an in-between or third gender. Their male roles were abandoned, and they would be married to men at the onset of puberty and accompany the women in their daily duties. For many early ethnographers, berdachism was the homosexuality of the North American West. Clearly, for the community of late twentieth-century LGBT Indigenous peoples, the term "berdache" is loaded with a colonial implication, and rather limited for the experiences of post-sexual revolution identities that were gaining headway in self-representative scholarship. For

[89] Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauris Morgensen, eds. introduction to *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011), 11.
[90] Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 9.
[91] Ibid., 9.

Figure 2.4 – Still from: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.

example, Monkman himself claims a two-spirit identity, but it is only Miss Chief his avatar who would be classified as berdache.

Although Williams focuses heavily on the berdache and the histories that would be considered in the formation of two-spirit discourse, he also accounts for the histories of male-male sex among warriors. This is an ambiguously "homosexual" activity that does not include the berdache, as sex or marriage with a berdache person would have been considered a heterosexual coupling. Although Williams' work indeed delivers a sense of sexually variant traditions that have continued, Indigenous anthropologist Brian Joseph Gilley notes the opposite side of the spectrum, in which Christian-forced ideology has pervaded Indigenous culture to a point of accepting hetero relations as "the endorsed forms of Native sexuality."[92] Despite the

[92] Brian Joseph Gilley, "Two-Spirit Men's Sexual Survivance against the Inequality of Desire," in *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, ed. Quo-Li Driskill, Chris

efforts to reclaim histories of gender variances, same-sex visibility is seen as an explicit rebuttal of sexed and gendered norms. He further ridicules the players within the academy who act on the history of berdachism and current two-spirit scholarship without pushing desire to the fore:

> Anthropology, feminism, queer theory, and GLBTQ studies have spent a great deal of time disrupting heteronormative sexuality only to produce a certain form of asexual criticism placing desire in a nebulous realm missing certain visceral realities and agentive subjective corporeality.[93]

Figure 2.5 – Still of crotch grab from: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.

In no way is Gilley demanding the efforts of berdache and two-spirit studies to be discredited. Quite the opposite: he suggests acknowledging the *visceral* desire that is present in work such as Monkman's. It is eroticism and eroticism's sexual potential that provides the bare basics for a

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Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauris Morgensen (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011), 124.

[93] Gilley, "Two-Spirit Men's Sexual Survivance against the Inequality of Desire," 124, 125.

discipline of sexuality to exist, and Gilley demands that more scholars, activists, and artists need to embrace this quality of two-spirit life to challenge the opinion that a past openness in Indigenous cultures has been re-embraced. In other words, the academy is too proper, too sanitised in its own efforts of discussing sexuality and queer erotics, and a clarity as to how a diverse sexuality in Indigenous histories actually looked must be built up. With a history that has faced attempted erasure, a reinvigoration of the "visceral" and erotic within two-spirit art is one way of re-establishing a visible sexual identity.

In a study on Indigenous media and ethnographic film, Faye Ginsburg opens with a definition:

> **Parallax:** (mf *parallaxe* fr. Gk. *Parallaxis*, change, alternation …)
> 1. The apparent displacement of an object from two different points.
> :: Webster's Third New International Unabridged Dictionary, 1976.

Ginsburg's approach is one that acknowledges the oppressive histories of ethnography. The study of Indigenous cultures during and after colonisation was part of a society that enabled, commissioned, and marketed ethnographic media. Instead of instituting some sort of reconciliation project that seeks a sense of closure for past events, Ginsburg suggests that spelunking these difficult histories gives voice to new ways of seeing and representing culture. In other words, past events and ethnographic projects are part of the fabric that constitutes contemporary identities. Although the films that make up the Miss Chief Trilogy are exhibited as contemporary video installations, the parallax approach to ethnographic media is in effect. Hammond's spatial mining through new methods of engaging with the media environment can be applied to Monkman's film, and the process of such a task is an intervention in historiographic method that compliments the parallax effect. For Ginsburg, utilising the parallax effect is necessary to understand contemporary Indigenous cultural production, since both the old and the new are "representations of culture *and* objects that are themselves implicated in cultural processes."[94] Through the concept of the parallax, looking through current media to revisit material of the past aids in the formation of links, ideas, and ways to understand how Miss Chief's image is bound to the social politics of diverse Indigenous sexualities. This means that

[94] Faye Ginsburg, "The Parallax Effect: The Impact of Indigenous Media on Ethnographic Film," in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, edited by Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 157.

her world is much larger than the media in which she is located, and a cultural landscape must move beyond Monkman's own platform.

Pornoarchaeology as a form of Media Archaeology

Moving along with this idea, remember that Monkman consistently recreates the aesthetic qualities of historical examples of art and film. Considering Bruno's "intertextual terrain" I will now consult literary and cinematic examples that are important to the understanding of the consciousness that was leading up to the period of Williams' research. These are, in the vein of Monkman's engagement with art, non-Indigenous representations of "the American Indian." They are nonetheless crucial to an understanding of his work, as they are the type of material from which Monkman sources his tricky wit and cultural criticism. There is no doubt that Monkman's work falls into what porn scholars Susanna Paasonen, Kaarina Nikunen, and Laura Saarenmaa refer to as "pornification," acknowledging the politics implicated in the spreading of explicit sexuality across media:

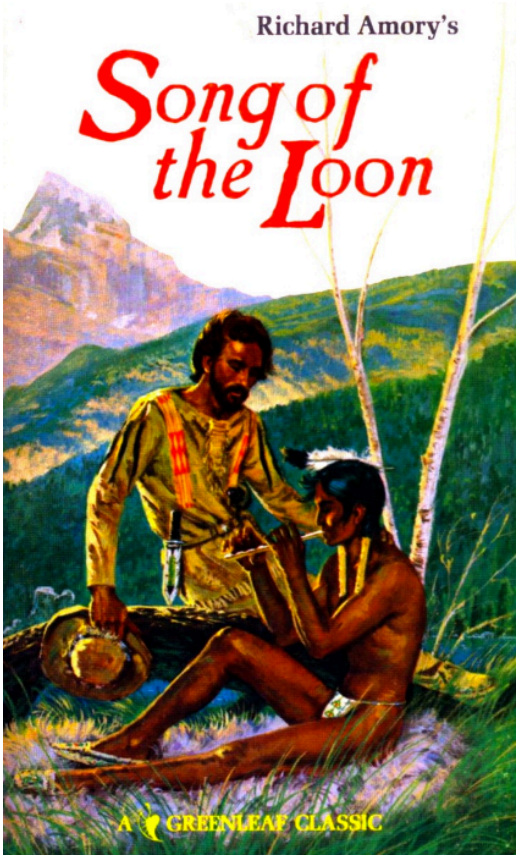
> On the one hand, pornification implies reiteration and recycling of representation conventions that are telling of the generic rigidity of porn. On the other hand, and perhaps paradoxically, it also gives rise to media performances subverting the generic conventions and boundaries of porn, facilitates novel representational spaces, ideas and agencies.[95]

Pornification is clearly in play with Monkman's practice, and yet, his work is never placed within the media archaeology of porn studies. This section of the chapter is an effort to fill the existing holes in the existing scholarship on Monkman and in porn studies, which I hope has productive outcomes.

Richard Amory's erotic pulp novel *Song of the Loon* (1966) precedes Williams' study by twenty years. Marketed to gay men, the novel was a product of the New Age/hippie movements that were embracing Indigenous culture as a way to retreat from conservative forces of urban modernity.[96] The text is a romp through the woods of the nineteenth-century Pacific Northwest, with a white quietly gay explorer, Ephraim MacIver, discovering the homosexual tendencies of the "Way of the Loon": a discreet but openly homosexual group of "Indian" men with open

[95] Susanna Paasonen, Kaarina Nikunen, and Laura Saarenmaa, "Pornification and the Education of Desire," in *Pornification: Sex and Sexuality in Media Culture*, ed. Susanna Paasonen, Kaarina Nikunen, and Laura Saarenmaa (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 13.
[96] Cindy Patton, *L.A. Plays Itself / Boys in the Sand* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 2015), 52.

practices of sexuality and relationships. In no way should the text be articulated as one of ethnographic validity or void of racist iconography. From the perspective of the parallax, however, we must ask: what new ideas, if any, can be gleaned from an examination of this sort of erotic literature in a thesis on Monkman? The character Singing Heron describes his people in the following way:



> We do not turn ourselves into witches or even dress as witches, as do some men from other tribes, who have some of our way, but do not belong to our society. We do not have berdaches, for we do not need to be a berdache or to dress as a witch. We were born as men, and never pretend to be otherwise. That is our way.[97]

This fantasy, although understudied, is discussed by Williams as an actual history, with accounts of sex among Indigenous men, including encounters between them and white explorers: "White frontiersmen even reported being sexually approached by Indian warriors; this expression was in public and had no impact on the attitudes of other Indians toward these warriors."[98] Chris Packard acknowledges the breadth of scholarship that focuses on the history of the berdache, but also uncovers histories of erotic male encounters among cowboys and Indigenous men of the American west.[99] Siksika (Blackfoot) Canadian artist Adrian Stimson offers this description of same-sex love as Indigenous tradition:

> Within tribal societies sexuality was fluid and it was quite acceptable for a warrior, a man, to team up with another man for a while. And he was never looked at as being queer or gay. It was just at that particular time, he wanted to be with that person. A Cree friend told me about how there were actually societies of men who were Two-Spirited who

[97] Richard Amory, *Song of the Loon* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, [1966] 2005), 53.
[98] Williams, *Spirit and the Flesh*, 92.
[99] Chris Packard, *Queer Cowboys and other Erotic Male Friendships in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 17-20.

would leave the tribe and go off together for a period of time and have one hell of a party.[100]

Figure 2.7 – Still from *Song of the Loon*, dir. Scott Hanson, 1970.

As I have already explained, the berdache were different from the men and women of their societies, and their visibility put them under a much stronger focus of early explorers and anthropologists who studied them as *the* homosexuals in the new world.[101] This was clearly not

[100] Adrian Stimson is cited here in an interview with Sam McKegny and Terrance Houle: Sam McKegney, *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 151.

[101] I use homosexual loosely here, as the term was not coined until 1870. French philosopher Michel Foucault considers Carl Westphal's *Archiv für Neurologie* (1870) to be a suitable text from which the history of "the homosexual" in language begins. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, [1978] 1990), 43. Harry Oosterhuis agrees with Foucault on 1970, however, he further contextualises the preceding emergence of "homosexuality" in medical discourse that led up to the coinage of the word with Hermann Kaan's *psychopathia sexualis* in 1844, the writings of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs between 1864 and 1879, and Westphal's 1869 medical journal article "Die contrare Sexualempfindung." Harry Oosterhuis, "Homosexual Emancipation in Germany Before 1933: Two

the case, although the influence of such studies have obviously shaped the understanding of two-spirit discourse, which has, as Gilley reveals, kept the "gay" visibility hidden and increasingly subject to homophobia in modern Native and non-Native societies.

Figure 2.8 – Broken wing reveals no-name's cock in an effort to communicate what it is they want from the white man. Still from *Dust Unto Dust*, dir. Lancer Brooks [Tom de Simone], 1970.

1970 was a year that saw three directions in Indigenous homosexuality on screen: soft-core gay narrative *Song of the Loon* (dir. Scott Hanson; *fig* 2.7), hardcore gay pornography *Dust Unto Dust* (dir. Tom DeSimone as Lancer Brooks), and Hollywood feature *Little Big Man* (dir. Arthur Penn). *Song of the Loon* was quickly adapted from its erotic novel format to a soft-core porn film, which in the context of gay pornography is "perhaps the most famous early attempt to

Traditions," in *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany: The Youth Movement, The Gay Movement, and Male Bonding Before Hitler's Rise*, ed. Harry Oosterhuis (New York: Haworth Press, 1991), 11-14.

merge story and sexuality."[102] Cindy Patton sees the book and film simply for their "racist clichés of Native Americans that Westerns had polished for mass consumption," with Indigenous characters played by white Californian jocks in red face.[103] She notes that the novel spawned other pornographic films with similar aesthetics, one of these having been *Dust Unto Dust* (dir. Tom DeSimone as Lancer Brooks, *fig.* 2.8). The hardcore film looks at two Indigenous brothers who have been cast out from their tribe for their homosexual desires. They come across a white man, the son of two pioneers in the early West who have died. He has independently formed a life for himself and somehow remained confined to his home and surrounding land without coming into contact with any locals. The two brothers, Broken Wing and "no name" (being a "half breed" was to live a life without a name), take their turns with the white man. Broken Wing approaches the white man first, and becomes the passive sexual partner. Shortly after, Broken Wing loses a fight with no name after a jealous fit, and no name claims the white man as his prize who now becomes the receiving sexual partner. In the end, the jealousy is too much for the brothers, who end up killing all three of them. The last sex scene is the group in heaven, all sharing in an oral-incestual orgy for what seems to be the rest of their spiritual lives (*fig* 2.9). The level of historical accuracy is unsurprisingly low, with the idea of a tribe rejecting young men for their homosexual behaviour being a less than likely occurrence. However, the idea of a homosocial setting in the American West leading into erotic play is, as Wiliams, Packard, and Stimson have articulated, a very likely occurrence. Director Tom DeSimone was clearly interested in capitalising on a history of homosexuality among men: Indigenous and settler. However, he ends up sacrificing a sense of legitimacy for the sake of overblown Romantic fantasy.

Song of the Loon and *Dust Unto Dust* addressed a public gay audience with new sexually charged politics, an envisioning of "Native" cultures that was popular at the time, and reference within other popular gay pornographic films such as *The Back Row* (dir. Jerry Douglas, 1973), where *Dust Unto Dust* is advertised as the film playing on a screen during a porn-cinema cruising encounter. Future research such as that of Williams would surprisingly devote much attention to the berdache, despite the male-male sexuality that seemed to historically be pushed

[102] Cindy Patton, *L.A. Plays Itself / Boys in the Sand* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 2015), 52.
[103] Ibid.

Figure 2.9 – Final sex scene, wherein the three souls of the men are in an incestual orgy in heaven. *Dust Unto Dust*, dir. Lancer Brooks [Tom de Simone], 1970.

to the margin. I find it of extreme value that although depictions in *Song of the Loon* and *Dust Unto Dust* are "fabricated" realities, their imaginative potential was an early step in revisioning an important facet of queer Indigenous histories. This praise comes with an acknowledgment of the problems associated with the films. Despite the achievement of second wave feminism during the 1960s and 1970s, there is a sense of rejecting the feminine man in these films. Even Amory's approach to mountainside homosexual fantasy was deemed too soft and delicate to the film's director Scott Hanson, who refers to the "flowery, nellie, gooey" quality of love-making passages in his description of changes in his cinematic adaptation of the text:

> We have removed some of the flagrant homosexuality, and have substituted instead a fantasy of masculine relationships, against a background of visual beauty…. These effects were intended primarily and legitimately to serve as a means of portraying sexual acts. The eroticism is still there. The desire will be tastefully disguised. We know that we

> can handle this in such a way as to make overt homosexuality understandable and sincere to today's audiences.[104]

Gay porn historian Jeffrey Escoffier reveals that advertisements in *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter* were run in the hopes of finding "rugged frontier-type" actors for a gay film in the vein of "Hollywood Westerns such as *The Big Sky, Stagecoach,* [and] *The Last of the Mohicans.*"[105] After auditions from "guys in full Indian drag, coonskin caps with glitter on them," adding that they "brought every queen—drag queen, transvestite—out of the closet," two assumed heterosexual men were chosen for the main roles, Morgan Royce and John Iverson.[106] The femininity that had been in extreme focus to berdache studies by early ethnographers was replaced with heterosexual men acting the fantasy of the sexually diverse American Indian.

The Native genre in gay pornography seemingly dissipated as quickly as it formed, with few inclusions in the coming years. The same year as *Song of the Loon* and *Dust Unto Dust*, however, a third film in a mainstream "New Hollywood" niche also depicted a diversely sexual Native American society: *Little Big Man* (dir. Arthur Penn), starring Dustin Hoffman, with many scenes shot in Alberta (*fig.* 2.10). In a scene from the film adapted from the novel of the same name by Thomas Berger (1964), Jack Crabb, who has been raised by "Indians" and aids in the fight against General Custer, is asked by Little Horse, played by Robert Little Star, to dine and live with him. The depiction of Little Horse is criticised in a 1972 issue of *Film Quarterly* by Dan Georgakas:

> The homosexual is an offensive limp-wrist drag queen from a Manhattan Hallowe'en ball. The people of the plains had reverence and fear of homosexual men. They lived in special parts of the village and warriors might live with them without loss of dignity. At certain times, the homosexuals were sought out to perform specific rituals and other times they were studiously avoided. All this is lost between flittering eyelashes and a lispy come-into-my-tepee-sweetie performance.[107]

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[104] Hanson quoted in Jeffrey Escoffier, *Bigger Than Life: The History of Gay Porn Cinema From Beefcake to Hardcore* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2009), 55.
[105] Escoffier, *Bigger Than Life*, 55.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Dan Georgakas, "They Have Not Spoken: American Indians in Film," *Film Quarterly* XXV, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 30.

Figure 2.10 – Little Horse in *Little Big Man*, dir. Arthur Penn, 1970.

Jacquelyn Kilpatrick in 1999 reified Georgakas' sentiment: "Little Horse's presence in the film seems to be for comic effect, which is insulting and a disservice to the Cheyennes, to homosexuals, and to Berger's character."[108] What I find insulting in these observations is not the "campy" homosexual character, but the expectation to see a masculine male in the role of a queer Indigenous man. Williams' research is again interestingly supported through this fiction film—especially in regards to the visible femininity of the berdache, and the social context of the humour and joking directed at them that has often been considered ridicule by white ethnographers who assume their own homophobic prejudices within Indigenous societies.[109] The invitation to live together would have also predominantly been at the request of a berdache—read *feminine male*—who would take on the role of a wife with a masculine warrior in a partnership that better served their economic ability with complementary gendered expectations in their work and social lives. Williams also records accounts of berdaches being known to be excessive in their choices of feminine attire beyond the typical associations with women.[110] Although I acquiesce with the critique of Hollywood for homophobia, I do think that taking offense at Little Horse is akin to ethnographic misinterpretations of sexual diversity in Indigenous American cultures. What I find most unnerving in these awkward accounts of film history and criticism is that Catlin's call to extinguish the tradition of the berdache has been

[108] Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 92.
[109] Williams, *Spirit and the Flesh*, 39-41
[110] Williams, *Spirit and the Flesh*, 75.

nearly carried out by the very researchers and filmmakers whose intentions are nevertheless genuine in their search to articulate the erotics and complexities of Indigenous sexuality.[111]

Gay/Queer Identity and a Process of Worlding

A consistent tendency in Monkman's work is to romantically resuscitate the grandeur of the histories of art and cinema. He retells and recreates the history of the North American West by inserting himself as a two-spirit diva within their respective histories. In doing so, he contributes a new layer to the media that composes Indigenous sexuality without breaking from the histories and proposing a new form. Monkman moves through and with them. This operates as both an establishment of Monkman's work within a network of pornographic cinema, and an expansion of the existing meanings of 1970s gay porn beyond the contexts of their original emergence.

The next question is one that confronts the purpose of a study such as mine, which might be accused of "reaching" for a conclusion through vague associative qualities: why does it matter that Monkman's contemporary film exists within wide ranging network of histories, identities, and politics? Locating and weaving together strings of relations develops a sense of Miss Chief's universe as one that actively criticises the privilege of telling histories in certain ways. Further, Monkman's works exist within a matrix of research, art, cinema, and literature that serves to uncover and reimagine queer Indigenous histories. In *Hard to Imagine*, Thomas Waugh's biblical contribution to the studies of sexuality and pornography, he quickly lays out the idea that "these images have meant more to [gay men], for all their furtiveness, than girlie-pictures to straight men. Fuck photos have always had to serve not only as our stroke materials but also, to a large extent, as our family snapshots and weddings albums, as our cultural history and political validation."[112] Waugh's work is so much more than a simple history of the male image in early photography and film. The spelunking of histories—no doubt inspired through his contemporaneous encounters with images during his life—serves to provide a platform from which a world can be built. These images are connected in Waugh's fabrication of a gay history,

[111] The persistence of extinguishing visibility of gender non-conforming persons is an ongoing issue, and is brought to a more contemporary platform in Viviane Namaste, *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
[112] Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 5.

a gay visual commons, which served to buttress identity against homophobia and secure a movement toward politically validating the identity of the gay man.

Instead of an archive of gay Native American erotica, there are histories of racist stereotyping in photography and cinema. Instead of a treasure trove of two-spirit representation, there are efforts to extinguish their very existence. There is no *Hard to Imagine* for Monkman, although his histories as a gay man in Canada are indeed entangled in the predominantly white subjects of Waugh's photographs and films. This is where Massumi's philosophy and Waugh's histories of the document come together to form a unique marriage in the political potentials of worlding. José Esteban Muñoz concludes his book *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* with the concept of worlding being able "to establish alternate views of the world."[113] He argues "queers of color and other minoritarians have been denied a world. Yet these citizen subjects are not without resources—they never have been."[114] A resource would be work such as that of Waugh's, who has provided a consolidation of images and thoughts toward the development of a gay world across various media. Muñoz argues that worlding for queers of color uses "the stuff of the 'real world' to remake collective sense of 'worldness' through spectacles, performances, and wilful enactments of the self for others."[115] In this way, Miss Chief's universe extends beyond the star character that I developed in the first chapter, and merges with Monkman's authorial identity in an entanglement of history, subjectivity, and media. Through the process of coming to perceive a cultural landscape surrounding Monkman's cinematic world, his works can be recognized as contemporary layers in the archaeology of Indigenous media and media of Indigeneity. Monkman is not simply reversing, inverting, or talking back to settler culture(s) of North America, he is building Indigenous media right into already operating cultural avenues that exist as resources within the western apparatus. He is rebuilding histories, moving through Miss Chief as transmedia avatar, and providing worlds of sovereign erotics instead of accepting that there are none.

This is a theory of productivity, and not one of negation. One of process toward a world, and not one that defines identity by that which it is not. Works such as Monkman's "*transport* the performer *and* the spectator to a vantage point where transformation and politics are

[113] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 195.
[114] Ibid., 200.
[115] Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 200.

imaginable. Worldmaking performances produce these vantage points by slicing into the façade of the real that is the majoritarian public sphere."[116] Monkman's vantage points that slice between Miss Chief's world and that of the spectator are the topic of the next chapter. There, I examine Monkman's installations as points of exchange between worlds, architectural spaces within Miss Chief's universe, and cinematic sites of collective erotic experience.

[116] Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 196.

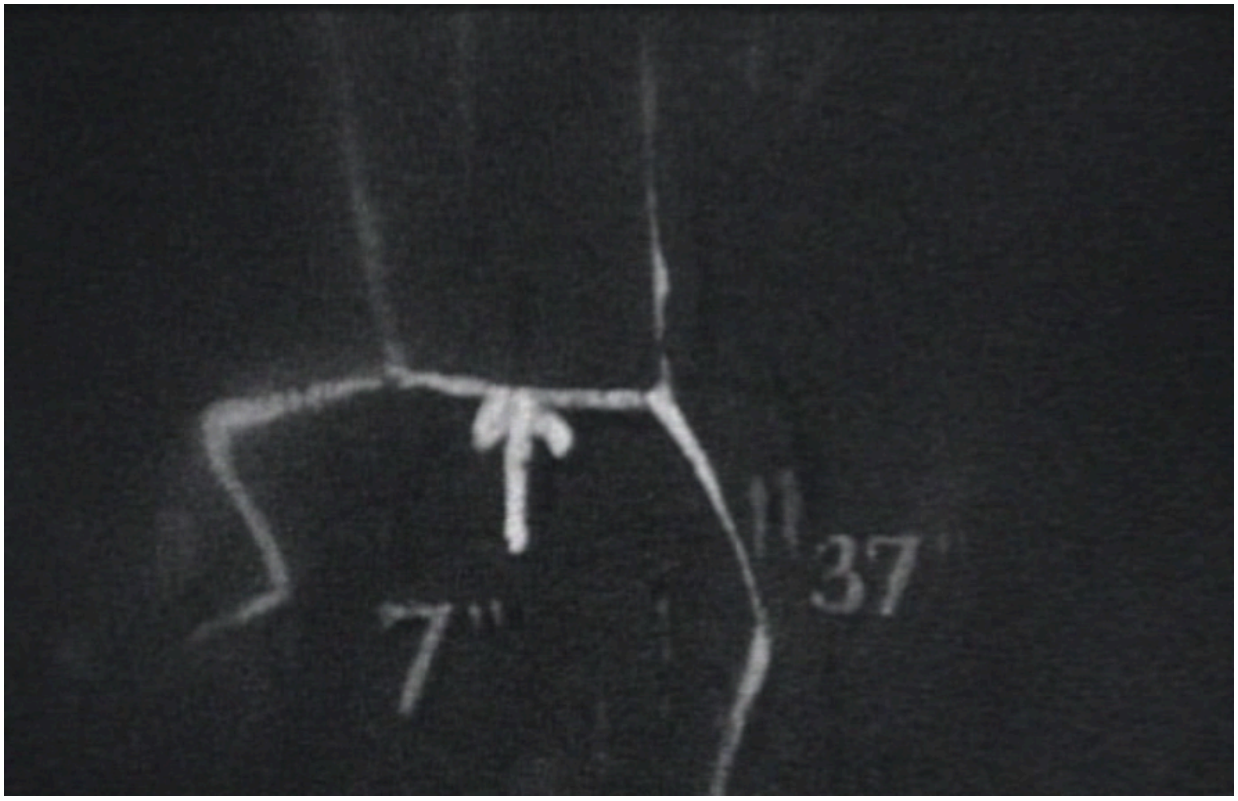

Figure 2.11 – Still from: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005.

CHAPTER THREE

Kent Monkman's Installations: Architectural Erotics and Productive Process

> When you project an image, "the wall dissolves and the image becomes the architecture." The body (…of the spectator) emerges from the deep space of architecture; the architecture emerges from (as) body. If the image *is* the body (and the image screen and the space), then we can see how [the artist] enacts on the deepest level a new possibility for "building dwelling thinking"—an enactment of the "personal as political" through an active engagement of space and other bodies that is, as I have argued, parafeminist.[117]
>
> – Amelia Jones, *Self/Image*

In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari reject the Freudian-derived psychoanalytic notion that desire is symptomatic of a lack. Instead, they position desire within a system of events that reach toward production. They write "desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented. Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows."[118] Desire is therefore productive, and is not simply cancelling out a negated lack resulting in a non-existent satisfaction. Desire coexists within already existing channels, moving through and beyond productions depending on its course.

The capitalisation on eroticism in Monkman's work makes it necessary to further explore this philosophy of desire. Building on to art histories through architectural installations in which the videos of the Miss Chief trilogy are screened, Monkman constructs spaces that allow for the viewership of single or multiple persons. No surprise here, the films continuously display subject matter touching on sexuality, gender, and race. As a result, spectatorial engagements with these installations are too often isolated within a discussion that pertains only to Indigenous and queer

[117] Amelia Jones, *Self/Image: Technology, Representation and the Contemporary Subject* (London: Routledge, 2006), 234.
[118] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, [1972] 1977), 5.

subjectivity. What might happen if Deleuze and Guattari's co-emerging flow of desire is considered? Acknowledging an assemblage of fragmentary flows that happens during a collective experience would mean that these installations affect viewers beyond the immediate display. This chapter explores the idea of erotic desire as something that is productive. John Paul Ricco calls the process of desire the "logic of the lure": "an exposure to the power of potentiality which includes both the potential to-be and to not-be, at once."[119] Desire is not an indication of wanting or a need to satisfy a lack, but is a building upon a flickering lure—a wink—to pursue more than what already is.

Figure 3.1 – Kent Monkman, *Salon Indien*, 2006.

I have established that Monkman built a media world for Miss Chief in chapter one, and in chapter two that he and his oeuvre exist within a much larger media environment of Indigeneity and sexuality. The worlding aspects of the two preceding chapters merge here in a conversation inspired by Monkman's architectural video installations. Haidee Wasson argues

[119] John Paul Ricco, *The Logic of the Lure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 82, 98.

"screens are nodes in complex networks."[120] They exist as a node because their form—"whether composed of chemical and light or code and cable"—exists as a physical access point that allows for interaction between a viewer and a media world.[121] Monkman's installations are nodular sites within the matrix that connect the universe of Miss Chief with that of the viewer. Designed as hybrids that merge the tipi with the movie theatre, they expand their cinematic function by allowing viewers to enter the apparatus of the screen. This chapter explores the process of a viewer physically entering Miss Chief's media mix through a node that connects the actual and virtual space of her world. This chapter is a response to Miss Chief's lure in a way that seeks to articulate Monkman's use of the erotic: a move toward including the viewer in an ecology of media, materials, and architectural space.

Erotic Imagery and its Emergence in Kent Monkman's Practice

Moving along within the current aesthetic trends of contemporary aboriginal art, Monkman anachronistically combines traditional Indigenous objects with new media. For example, the tipi of *Salon Indien* (2006, *fig.* 3.1) is wrapped in luxurious fabrics and rich royal colours instead of tanned animal hides. This is one of three installation models that he combines a revamped style of traditional nomadic architecture with cinema. Inside the tipis he screens his films from the Miss Chief Trilogy. Considering that Miss Chief is the star of the films screned, and *Boudoir de Berdashe* (2007, *fig.* 3.8) in particular is her private *boudoir*, we must again look at these works within the cultural landscape explained in the previous chapters. Bruno writes: "a palpable imprint is left in this moving landscape; in its folds, gaps, and layers, the geography of cinema and the museum holds remnants of what has been projected onto it at every *transito*, including the *emotions*."[122] A cultural landscape emerged from his early works that gradually moved from ambiguous homoeroticism to displaying explicit gay sexual activity. Although I brought up Monkman's early works within theories of landscape to create a space for Miss Chief's world in chapter one, more needs to be said on his process of building an erotic fantasy.

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[120] Haidee Wasson, "The Networked Screen: Moving Images, Materiality, and the Aesthetics of Size," in *Fluid Screens, Expanded Cinemas*, ed. Janine Marchessault and Susan Lord (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 76.
[121] Wasson, "The Networked Screen," 76.
[122] Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 39.

Paintings such as *Safe in the Arms of Jesus* (2001, *fig.* 3.1) appear to be abstracted forms of language and shades of colour, combining Cree syllabics with hymnal passages.[123] It is not quite

Figure 3.2 – Kent Monkman, *Safe in the Arms of Jesus*, 2001.

clear whether or not the shadowy figures behind the abstract markings are wrestling or fucking. Christine Ross discusses very similar imagery in Robert Longo's sculpture *The Wrestlers* (1979, *fig.* 3.3). Although the title of the work suggests that the men are in the middle of a fight, the title of the series *Boys Slow Dance* conveys that this is but one part of a much larger erotic scene. Ross argues that this ambivalence creates a moment of rupture that leaves the viewer in a paused state of understanding the image:

[123] Cree syllabics—image-letters as the written form of the language—were formed by Methodist missionary James Evans in northern Manitoba between 1840 and 1856. Margot Francis, *Creative Subversions: Whiteness, Indigeneity, and the National Imaginary* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 148, 149.

> As the sign is appropriated, it is isolated to set into play a chain of unstable correspondences where signs are constantly being replaced and meaning is constantly being deferred. It is this continuous replacement, deferral, illegibility, and meaninglessness that appropriation art sets out to activate so as to ultimately disclose the ambivalence of contemporary images.[124]

Figure 3.3 – Robert Longo, *The Wrestlers*, in the series *Boys Slow Dance*. 1979.

Monkman's method of appropriation began quite early in his career, focusing on the Canadian painter from the Group of Seven, Lawren Harris. Monkman reimagined Harris' *Mount Thule, Bylot Island* (1930) as *Prick Island* (2001), and stripped *North Shore, Lake Superior* (1926, *fig.* 3.4) down to simply *Superior* (2001, *fig.* 3.5). The syllabics from *Safe in the Arms of Jesus* softened their Lascaux-esque linearity and transformed into a smouldering English overlay, but instead of Christian verses, these read of anal sex, swallowing cum, and erections—without forgetting beads, arrows, feathers, headbands, and tribes:

[124] Christine Ross, *The Aesthetics of Disengagement: Contemporary Art and Depression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 13, 14.

> *Superior*: His dick moved freely throughout my wet mouth, pushing back as far as possible, then withdrawing. Licking its tip really turned me on. This was exciting. I liked this. I got erect. His prick suddenly became extra hard, his warm cum filling my mouth. I tongued it together and swallowed, receiving a feeling of fulfillment. I rose to my feet. We embraced again. The feathered headband was placed on my head. "You are now man tribal member and Indian blood brother. I name you coyote…" "I'll show my headband to everyone at school. And in the gym shower, display my crotch hair shaped to an arrowhead. My initiation will remain a tribal secret."[125]

The Homoerotic ambivalence is now in explicit focus, even if the bodies of the men embracing in *Superior* are still somewhat abstract. The concluding sentence over *Superior* anachronistically synthesises what seemed to be a moment in Canadian history with a homosexual encounter among teen boys in a contemporary high school setting. This replacement of a history does not effectively delete an art object and put another its place, but builds onto the work and its memory. This is important to keep in mind throughout this chapter, and aids in the understanding of desire as productive—the erotic as something that builds. Moving toward abstracted striations of paint that compose to form recognisable images, Monkman began directing the erotic toward a possible potential—full-on fucking. There is a trajectory here, a follow through of Ricco's enticing lure that led to a sexual encounter. There was a potential for an expression of gay love(lust), and it was satisfied (or at least it looks like he enjoyed it).

Deleuze and Guattari speak of the artist as a figure within the breakdown and refigurement of desire, but they add: "The artist stores up his treasures so as to create an immediate explosion, and that is why, to his way of thinking, destructions can never take place as rapidly as they ought to."[126] At this point of immediate "explosion," Monkman's works are broken down as references of the European colonisation of the Americas. He reinserts homosexual lust within those histories, and with the clever conclusion of the text on *Superior*, manoeuvres these histories of gay sex into traditions that continue to the present day. Are his works actually critical, or are they interpreted that way? Can their immediate "explosion" simply be a repetition or homage to a work by another artist? Monkman's clever cues are in the "stored up treasures," the "winks" that attract a viewer who might then notice the ambivalent qualities of his works. *Superior*, for example, is immediately perceived as a Lawren Harris remake. Even if only a few words of the overlay can be clearly read, they are sexually explicit, which may or may

[125] Transcription made available in David McIntosh, "Kent Monkman's Postindian Diva Warrior: From Simulacral Historian to Embodied Liberator," *Fuse* 29, no. 3 (July 2008): 15.
[126] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 32.

Figure 3.4 – Lawren Harris, *North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926. National Gallery of Canada.

Figure 3.5 – Kent Monkman, *Superior*, 2001.

not be seen at the same time as the two male bodily shapes that are hunched over—wrestling/embracing/fucking. The immediate explosion is a Harris appropriation. The gradual destruction is the coming to form of gay male eroticism and the anachronism of early twentieth century landscape and contemporary high school antics. I would not make the argument that appropriation is always necessarily "clever," but Monkman's style of appropriation certainly is.[127] A clever image ensures that the immediate explosion begins to gradually shift and form a perceptible entity among the pieces that were breaking apart. Identification based on negation is locked and bound to this destructive process—something *is* that which it *is not*. Monkman's painting is not Harris's, however, the process of recognising its visual "inheritance" and deviation from an original programme sifts through the pieces lost in negation and uses them to rebuild a new image, a new world.

Directly preceding their statement on immediate explosion, Deleuze and Guattari write "the work of art itself is a desiring machine."[128] Thomas Waugh works within a similar vein by describing the erotic as "a whole range of cultural practices that turn us on. All have in common the intent and/or the effect of arousal, and/or the articulation or description of sexual behaviours and/or objects."[129] Waugh's definition supports Deleuze and Guattari's idea that desire is entangled among interactions between artworks and viewers, an assemblage of events that cocompose with desire's machinic movement. Waugh even allows the room for erotics to differ: different cultural objects carry with them varying degrees of arousal depending on viewer and the understanding of the image's context.[130] It is almost amusing that something such as the erotic—although seemingly so simply linked to sexual arousal—can become a volatile thing to define. It is clearly not limited to sexual arousal of the human being—although this is a major part of it—but is part of a much larger ecology of media in which the human simply plays a part. Eroticism itself is a carrier of potential within a network that includes the visual exchange between viewer and work. Its meaning will vary depending on viewer, and in a collective setting, situates multiple viewers in a complex web of unspoken desire(s).

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[127] This is brought out quite well in the first chapter, where I explore the trickster as a character of dark wit and cleverness.
[128] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 32.
[129] Waugh, *Hard to Imagine*, 6.
[130] Desiring machines would later become "assemblages" in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Ibid., 7.

Written over forty years ago, Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* was structured as an intervention in the fields of psychological philosophy and identity, positioning a theory of desire as productive in place of what continues to be a theory of desire that relies on lack and negation.[131] Although there is an unmistakably clear tendency toward identification through a process of deconstruction, there is no pure negation, as the explosions and "shrapnel" of perception are already cosmically recomposing. Desire cannot be thought of as a process that simplifies or reduces trajectories of perception, and desire's erotic potential is not simply a regressive phenomenon full of problems. Desire is itself a tug toward a new formation of self, a will to merge with an environment through erotic ecologies. These ecologies include the networks of erotics made possible through the senses. These networks form new worlds in the body's response to stimuli and potential satisfaction of eroticism's will.

Architecture as Productive Desire and Kent Monkman's *Théatre de Cristal*

Miss Chief is a desiring machine.[132] In *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter* (2002), Monkman provided an answer to why the hunter in the nineteenth-century paintings by Paul Kane has fallen off of his horse. Monkman's new landscape of the American West follows the reverence for classicism by nineteenth-century Romantic painters—presenting Miss Chief as not only a hunter of the white cowboy in assless chaps, but also as a Cupid reincarnated from ancient Mediterranean mythology. In *Built Upon Love*, Alberto Pérez-Gómez sees cupid as a figure that resulted after the gods Ouranos and his mother Gaia were violently separated from their permanent copulation by Kronos, who sliced off Ouranos's genitals with a sickle to separate them. Prior to this event that created a division between earth and sky and therefore the perception of space/time, Eros was the god that allowed for production. The concept of Eros has

[131] Queer theory and psychology unfortunately continue to perpetuate desire as a negative thing. Despite his overall scholarly excellence, Evangelos Tziallas is an example of this when he argues that desire is problematic: "complex phenomena we call desire are manifest from political incorrectness." Although for the purpose of his research such a statement can carry its value, I cringe at such a reductive definition of desire, which leaves very little room to build a new way of thinking out the problem and excuses desire's "problematic" with repressed human fault. Negativity is found at every turn in this process, and conclusions such as this do nothing to advance research in sexuality studies. This is not simply the fault of Tziallas, but of a community of scholars, editors, publishers, etc. who contribute to this stagnant writing on lust's effects. "The new 'Porn Wars': representing gay male sexuality in the Middle East." *Psychology & Sexuality* 6, no. 1 (2015): 93-110.

[132] By suggesting she is a "desiring machine," I am precluding that her identity is one composed across media as an assemblage – moving with desire to satisfy desire's lure toward potential.

been considered one of desire and sexuality together folded to "express the overabundance of being—plenitude rather than lack…*artistic power*".[133] Despite histories of art that confuse Cupid with Eros, they are not the same, because Cupid needs to instil desire among individuals, whereas Eros produces more-than what already is.[134] There is definitely an interesting tug of representation and philosophy here. Although Miss Chief in this painting is immediately present as a Cupid figure whose desiring shot accidentally murders a potential lover, her world woven together from various media by Monkman becomes saturated in erotic process—Eros.

For Pérez-Gómez, philosophy developed through architecture because architecture already had a more-than human engagement in its production of space.[135] He adds "architecture must *lovingly* transform the *prima materia* of the world to reveal a hidden order with restorative powers. …To produce wonder, [the architect] must both love his work and care profoundly for the Other to whom it is addressed."[136] This bringing to form is not exclusive to the architect, and is a continuous process in the life of architecture: future experiences of individual and collective participation in an architect's specific designation of space continue to mould new perceptions and therefore shift the work into a bearer of more meaning(s) than for what it may have originally been programmed. Alfred North Whitehead articulates the beginning stages of this process through his concepts of "presentational immediacy" and "causal efficacy." "The complex interplay between the two modes of perception" is necessary to grasp what is being perceived through the form of what he calls symbolic reference. It is only through symbolic reference that I can understand and explain what I am looking at, and it is through symbolic reference in the forms of these very letters that I can transfer this experience through language. Although Whitehead continues the line of thought that symbolic reference is a nexus of aware perception(s), he corrects the fault of philosophy that relies too heavily on *only* the symbolic reference and argues that further attention needs to be placed on its two coemerging qualities.

Although I will now attempt to articulate these concepts through Monkman's work, they ultimately cannot be exemplified in their pure forms. Both need qualities of each other to form a

[133] Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love*, 12, 13.
[134] Ibid., 13.
[135] This is brought up in *Built Upon Love* and is the thesis of: Indra Kagis McEwen, *Socrates' Ancestor: An Essay on Architectural Beginnings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993.
[136] Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love*, 18.

degree of symbolic reference in order for their materially and mentally understood function to emerge. I will isolate his installation *Théatre de Cristal* (2006, *fig.* 3.6) to exemplify the process toward symbolic reference. The tipi that has been crafted from strings of glass doubles as a miniature cinematic theatre. The floor is used as a screen on which the artist projects the films from the Miss Chief Trilogy. Whitehead writes that perception in the mode of presentational immediacy is "perception which merely, by means of a sensum, rescues from vagueness a contemporary spatial region, in respect to its spatial shape and its spatial perspective from the percipient."[137] The clustering and formation of matter into specific kinds of media are perceived in their immediate form; I speak of the installation as an installation because the physical medium is perceived by me as such. However, it is impossible to suggest that perceiving an installation is a pure model of presentational immediacy, as there are qualities of the installation's physical existence that I bring to the event that persuades me to understand that I am looking at an installation. An example of how the installation is a pure form of presentational immediacy is impossible, as the materiality of its media form would be lost to the abyss of pure abstraction: "on its own, it does nothing."[138] However, the physical structure of the installation—its glass and apparatus of light for the video projection—must be understood as constituents that come together to immediately present the media to a viewer. It is "the state where perception is ensconced in the perception of perception"—we know something is being perceived.[139]

Manning describes perception in the mode of causal efficacy as the "state of perception that refers to the immanent relationality of all experience."[140] Memory and "feeling-tones" are part of causal efficacy, "the immanent relationality of all experience."[141] There is a motivation to build connections through and of experiences. Without these connections, perception in the mode of presentational immediacy would render something such as architecture as only an abstraction of the materials used in its design. Causal efficacy is the collection of strings of relation, the weaving together a fabric of understanding—"an immediate sense of how things go together."[142]

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[137] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press [1929] 1978), 121.
[138] Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 55.
[139] Manning, *Relationscapes*, 55.
[140] Ibid., 54.
[141] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 120; Manning, *Relationscapes*, 54.
[142] Manning, *Relationscapes*, 55.

Figure 3.6 – Kent Monkman, *Théatre de Cristal*, 2006.

Causal efficacy is part of the reason why Monkman's works have consistently been ghettoised in scholarly engagements of race, queer sexuality, and social histories of art.[143] For some viewers/scholars, the content demands a discussion appropriate to a discipline such as queer theory or postcolonial studies. Remember from the introduction of this thesis, that for Leanne Simpson it is context and process—not content—that contributes to the mediation of Indigenous knowledge and healing. That said, discussions based primarily on the content of Monkman's works have been an important part of the scholarship on political imagination, visual culture, art history, Canadian identity, and issues of Indigenous sovereignty. There is however more to be

[143] As I brought up in the introduction, it is very rare that Monkman's work is ever talked about as material art works. Instead, they almost always serve as tools for a discussions of queer sexuality, colonial writings of art, and Indigenous sovereignty. I will remind my reader again that in no way am I meaning to devalue the existing work on Monkman, but an analysis of how his media engages within a network of media, materiality, and meaning is long past due.

said, and the artworks themselves speak with and among viewers even if most scholars pretend not to hear them.

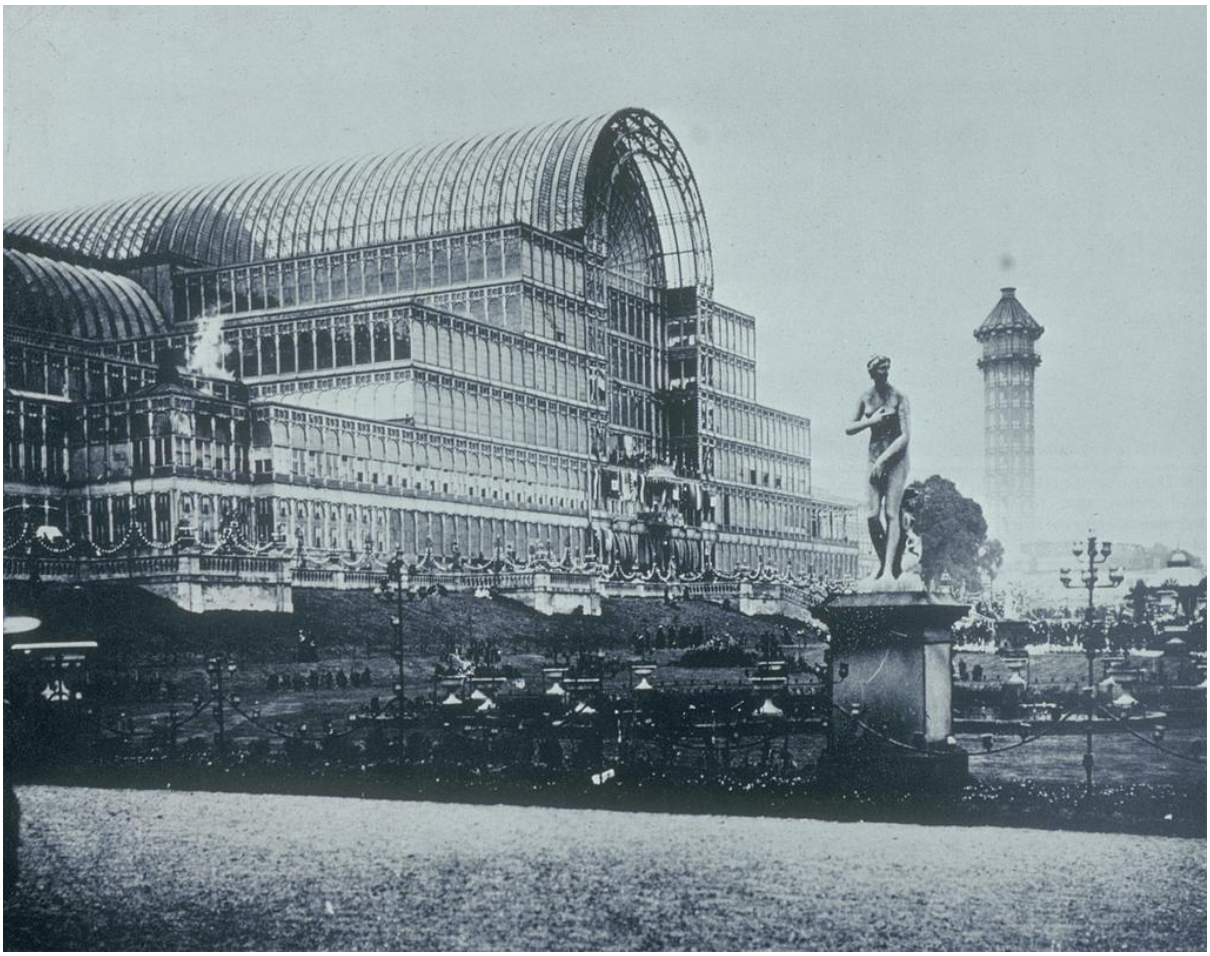

Figure 3.7 – The Crystal Palace of London, designed by Architect Joseph Paxton, 1851.

Erotics of Looking and the Similarity of *Théatre de Cristal* to England's Crystal Palace

Whitehead's philosophy merges well with the understanding of Hammond and Bruno's cultural landscapes, looking *at* past events *with* contemporary art as "an archaeology of the present."[144] Although Monkman has not been formally trained as an architect, these installations are architectural in their program. Despite the artist referring to *Théatre de Cristal* as an installation that borrows from the brand of a French champagne, I can only see the ways in which it mimics the Crystal Palace in London that served as a world exhibition venue in 1851

[144] Bruno, *Public Intimacy*, 39.

(*fig.* 3.7). Designed by English architect Joseph Paxton, the iron and glass structure is described by Celeste Olalquiaga as having "inaugurated the modern era as we know it."[145] Emphasising the role of the Crystal Palace within the histories of seeing and being seen in a modernising world, Olalquiaga makes it clear that it was not only a space of looking, but it also served as a place within a globalising network for encountering objects from the near and distant reaches of the British Empire. Monkman's obvious appropriation of the Victorian-era architecture becomes more than simply an anachronistic similarity in Miss Chief's media world. Symbolic reference ensures that the presentational immediacy and causal efficacy are understood in their ways of coming together. Otherwise, if these processes in the formation of perception are not considered with *Théatre de Cristal*, the reception of this work would be limited to its most immediate content: race and sexuality. These are not wrong readings of the work, and in fact are necessary to the next step of what the work *does*—but they are limiting on their own accord as they prevent the surplus qualities of erotic perception from being considered in spectatorial engagement with cinema and the visual arts.

Angela Vanhaelen and Bronwen Wilson offer the invitation to take on the prospect of the curiously neglected link between "looking" and erotics. This is based on the titillating fact that art history has for centuries been written in erotic ways.[146] The Crystal Palace was an explosion of erotic looking, with many historical accounts of the building using "desire" as a way to explain how the see-through structure and its contents appealed to the voyeuristic senses.[147] Anne McClintock writes "the innovation of the Crystal Palace, that exemplary glass inspection house, lay in its ability to merge the pleasure principle with the discipline of the spectacle."[148] Spectacular engagement with Monkman's *Théatre de Cristal* refigures the erotic engagement with objects on display within a complicated web of politics, spun of voyeuristic desire from within the histories of looking in architecture. The pleasure happens (happened?), so what now?

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[145] Celeste Olalquiaga, *The Artificial Kingdom: On the Kitsch Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 31.

[146] Vanhaelen and Wilson propose "intercourse" as a suitable term in the formation of materials that explain the connection between the desire of looking and the seduction of visual culture. Angela Vanhaelen Bronwen Wilson, "The Erotics of Looking: Materiality, Solicitation and Netherlandish Visual Culture," *Art History* 35, no. 5 (2012): 874.

[147] For examples of this, see Friedberg 2006, Olalquiaga 1998, and Skelly 2011, 2014 in bibliography.

[148] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995), 58.

Despite there being no explicit connection on Monkman's part between *Théatre de Cristal* and the Crystal Palace, a network of relations is present, and it is a thick one. This is an example of how Whitehead's symbolic reference is an integral part of understanding the cultural landscape. First, the presentational immediacy is in the structure of *Théatre de Cristal*: the glass strings and projector-cum-chandelier (that appears to also be the glans of a penis). Causal efficacy is "perception of the settled world in the past as constituted by its feeling-tones, and as efficacious by reason of those feeling-tones."[149] There is clearly an archaeological process happening, wherein "feeling tones" that incite personal understanding of what the installation is emerge along with presentational immediacy to form a mode of perception. Perhaps no memory of the Crystal Palace exists for a viewer, and no scholar before me has made this connection. Experiences are never the same, and their intensities vary in a continuum of degrees. Carl Knappett writes

> we may objectify a thing to some extent by naming it, framing it, or fragmenting it, but each process only gets a partial grip on its subject. By applying multiple overlapping processes of objectification we may exert a tighter grip—hence the power of object *networks*.[150]

The video installation on it its own is a glass structure, with videos projected on its floor. The films are pushed along with erotic images that leave no doubt as to what the installation as an object is "saying." It comes as no surprise that this material agency has a limit, and Knappett states the obvious when writing that "we fool ourselves if we think that objects or things can tell the whole story."[151] Looking at *Théatre de Cristal* incites a feeling-tone of a past known only from the passages of architectural history (the Crystal Palace no longer exists). Bruno's archaeology of the present is an archaeology across time and media, and just like archaeology that uncovers cities from under the sands of time, pieces come together at different layers. There is an entanglement of agency distributed among the object and its participants/viewers. The artist/architect/filmmaker's intentions can be continuously built upon, continued and reread through new engagements that incite, rework, and give new meanings to histories in which objects place *and are* placed.

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[149] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 120.
[150] Carl Knappett, *An Archaeology of Interaction: Network Perspectives on Material Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 190.
[151] Knappett, *An Archaeology of Interaction*, 190.

We can think of Monkman's work that builds onto Miss Chief's world as windows that allow us to peek inside her universe.[152] The architectural installations, however, provide so much more than simply looking in. They are examples of symbolic reference that form a nodal point between the convergences of the viewers' universe(s) with that of Miss Chief's. Pérez-Gómez writes: "architecture opens up a space of desire in which fiction is interwoven with human actions; it entices the inhabitant/participant to reach out to know and engage desire without being destroyed, transcending rather than hiding our mortal condition."[153] The idea of objects and things carrying the potential for more-than what they are is nothing new, with profound sacredness being given to holy stones, relics, and sites throughout history. Knappett refers to the "flicker" that draws attention to objects and ideas—a concept quite like Ricco's productive process of the lure.[154] These are the moments Ross describes as having the ability to suspend time, the moment that symbolic form comes together between bodies and objects in an ecology of perceptions. *Theatre de Cristal* is both a cinematic theatre of bubbling champagne and a teepee made of glass strings, a node within Miss Chief's network and simply a video installation for the unaware viewer. Its material form implicates a viewer in glass's invisibility, and its very structure could be seen as a loosely woven "screen." The films being screened on the concrete floor invite the viewer to come closer, to enter the glass structure, and observe histories of the American West that include Miss Chief. At first, the immediate explosion of "silent films" begins to crumble with clever clues of contemporaneity. Thus, the viewer's gaze becomes interrogated as they have folded their spectatorial experience within Miss Chief's world, and their involvement in the erotics of looking is wrapped up within a new configuration of identity, politics, and appropriative exchange. Thus, the process of attending to the lure is productive. Not only does desire inspire production of a potential event, but the potential itself is a construction of a world that the erotic initiates. Reconfigurations are always in flux, worlds worlding through constantly emerging ecologies of media that include but are not limited to the human.

Manning agues "when symbolic reference occurs, a worlding takes place. This worlding can lead to false premises: the very fact that it *can* be delusional is a key aspect of symbolic

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[152] Although I am not quoting directly, my understanding of visual art possessing a window quality comes from: Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 12.
[153] Pérez-Gómez, *Built upon Love*, 205.
[154] Knappett, *An Archaeology of Interaction*, 190; Ricco, *The Logic of the Lure*, 11.

reference."[155] On worlding, Manning and Massumi write "Each instant, a landing site for a taking place. Each taking place a prehensive interlocking of reciprocal modes. Matter of fact: the thisness of takings place, the thisness of architecting that world."[156] These works are instances of landing sites, built moments of connection between worlds made possible through a spatial engagement with the nomadic architecture and intersecting screens. Manning explains this through the choreographic:

> A mobile architecture is one way of naming the event of choreography's self-generative force. It is what can be felt when the choreographed event generates a more-than that touches on its propositional nature. A mobile architecture is the direct experience of the more-than in its field effect. It is "what makes a work stand on its own"—what makes a work work.[157]

Monkman's continuous weaving-together of an intermedia world for Miss Chief, and the migration of installations from gallery to gallery are a form of choreography. These installations are landing sites within that choreography, not only allowing for a visible "cut"—presentational immediacy—but also operating as a point of convergence among worlds. The clustering of landing sites to form a sense of a world is not to satisfy a lack of knowing that world, but to build from curiosities (lures) inspired by vectors of experience—always moving, finding landings.

Monkman is the architect of not only these installations, but also the virtual world of Miss Chief. She is an avatar within a universe that is similar to but separate from the one that defines Monkman's identity. Of course, the most obvious nexus between my world and hers is the body of Monkman—who performs her and ultimately shapes her world through qualities of his own. I have moved along with Whitehead's theory of symbolic reference to show how Monkman's work exists within an entangled matrix of images and meanings. As much as I have made the effort to place media as an agent in the production of meaning, Monkman's work has been formed by him, his politics, and his identity that become quite present in the world he has built. For Pérez-Gómez, desire's productivity is coupled with the visceral potentials of erotics. The politics surrounding the architect's life influences the qualities of world they build:

> The architect as *iatromantis* (shaman, from "healer" and "prophet") harnesses the power of the poetic image to engage others in a communion with other worlds *within* our world.

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[155] Manning, *Relationscapes*, 57.
[156] Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 29.
[157] Erin Manning, *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013) 100, 101

> Through light, materials, and words, he or she helps us confront the darkness that affects our lives to the point of distress. Like shamans in many cultures around the world, the architect enables us to fly and eventually become healed.[158]

The concept of productivity through desire is essential to a system of change. The political messages of Monkman's work address oppression faced by Indigenous peoples of North America at the hands of colonising Europeans. This is the single most obvious part of his films and art, and is of central focus for most scholars who write on Monkman's work. The ways media transfer Indigenous forms of knowledge need to be considered if the works' context, content, and process can begin to build an environment that accommodates the healing of social injustices. It is not that the work hasn't already begun this process, it is that most scholars are not listening to what is immediately perceived as glass, lights, and video. I am not suggesting that I am the only one to finally break through to what Monkman is doing. I wouldn't be so bold. My intention has been to move through Monkman's works as films, art, and architecture instead of as simply visual cues for the discussion of "actual" histories. My goal is one to activate activism from the fabrication of Miss Chief's world, a potential for erotics, and satisfaction for Gilley's call for the return of the visceral as method of two-spirit and gay Indigenous survivance.

[158] Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love*, 15.

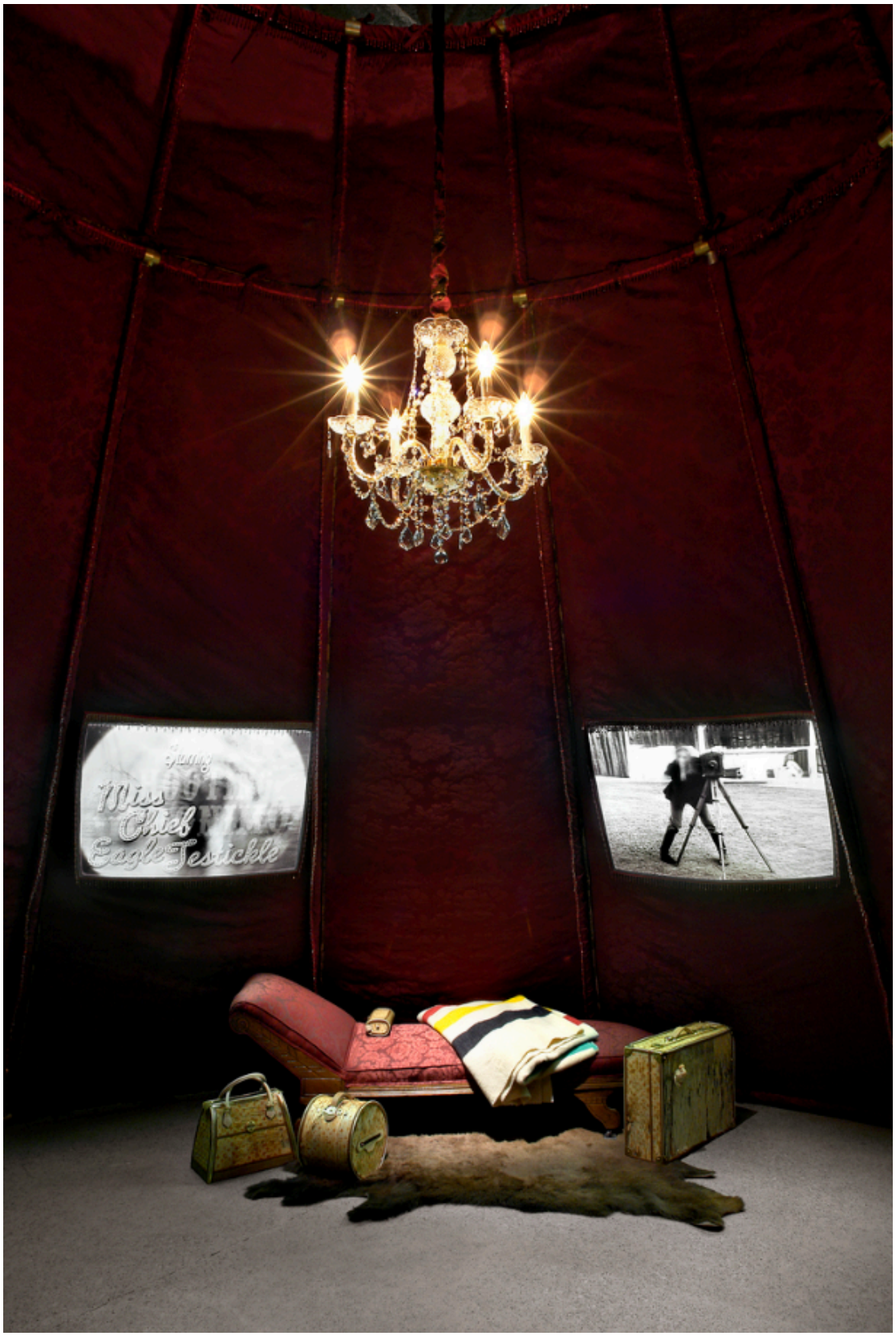

Figure 3.8 – Kent Monkman, *Boudoir de Berdashe*, 2007.

> Archaeology situates its analysis at another level: the phenomena of expression, reflexions, and symbolization are for it merely the effects of an overall reading in search of formal analogies or translations of meaning; as for causal relations, they may be assigned to the level of the context or of the situation and their effect on the speaking subject; both, in any case, can be mapped once one has defined the positivities in which they appear and the rules in accordance with which these positivities have formed.[159]
>
> – Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*

Thoughts on Media Archaeology

In the introduction to *What is Media Archaeology?*, Jussi Parikka asks: "what are the conditions of existence of this thing, of that statement, of these discourses and the multiple media(ted) practices with which we live? Such questions are political, aesthetic, economic, technological, scientific and more—and we should refuse attempts to leave out any of the aspects."[160] When I applied to the master's program of film studies at Concordia University, it was with the intention of contributing to the field of identity studies by using Kent Monkman's films and videos. As a gay man from the Canadian prairies, I was erotically transfixed by Miss Chief's lure, her campy appropriation of Cher's image, and the general focus on the North American West. Being told of my own mixed English and Cree heritage as a child while looking in the mirror at my brown hair and blue eyes has also, to say the least, given me nothing more than a sense of confusion when it comes to my (perceived) racial identity. Monkman's identity and selected contents in his work have always left me feeling enchanted, as if the artist is speaking to only me while surrounded by doped up audiences at public museums. Logic would suggest that this is not true, however, this sense of something happening beyond the containment of viewing is work was the potential to push my thesis into what it is now. Two years is a long time to fiddle with a rather small research project, and the frame of my study continued to move with every paper I read, every class I took, and every discussion I had with students and professors. Instead of comfort within the discipline of film studies, I felt confined in my own research questions and the media to which I was supposed to consult. How do I isolate one part

[159] Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, [1969] 1989), 181.
[160] Jussi Parikki, *What is Media Archaeology?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 18.

of his practice for the sake of disciplinary segregation? Well, in short, I don't. I embraced the media archaeology that I realised was already happening through established scholars in film studies, my advisor included, and moved with their work as models of method and process. Parikka considers media archaeology as a tool that works within a cultural landscape—functioning through networks that have been built across layers of media, media worlds, and their transdisciplinary readings. Despite what still seems to be a distinct divide between scholars who work in social histories of identity studies, and those who follow what might be called a "Deleuzian" frame of microperception(s) and the process of events, I never gave one up for the other. Michel Foucault refers to Deleuze and Guattari's work as an "erotic art"—a swift and quick example of how seemingly opposing trends in politically situated scholarship shares more in context than it differs in content.[161] Media archaeology is a way to move *with* the "political, aesthetic, economic, technological, scientific," and I have throughout my chapters begun to explore the potential for "more" in media studies.

In a previous introduction to an edited anthology on media archaeology, Parikka along with Erkki Huhtamo state "media archaeology should not be confused with archaeology as a discipline."[162] They assume that since scholars within the discipline of archaeology are out digging in physical layers of built environments from the past while the transdisciplinary practitioners of media archaeology are in "textual, visual, and auditory archives," there is a clear divide in how they process their work, and what their work does. Situating archaeology as a discipline that digs in the dirt is reductive, and disavows the media archaeological approach that is already in use in archaeological theory. Elsaesser reveals that it has been both archaeologists *and* media scholars who have "critiqued and outright reject[ed]" media archaeology.[163] All media archaeologists seem to agree that the field/process is wide open for interpretation, methods, and future suggestions, so perhaps the ambivalence is a distressed attempt to redefine the contours of disciplines that each deal with media in a specific way. I discovered networks, material culture, and things-with-agency first through architectural theory, which bled into archaeological scholarship, and eventually transferred into my approach to film and media

[161] Michel Foucault, preface to *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schiziphrenia*, by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (London: Penguin, [1972] 1977), xii.
[162] Parikka, Jussi, and Erkki Huhtamo, eds., introduction to *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 3.
[163] Thomas Elsaesser, "Media Archaeology as Symptom," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 14, no. 2 (2016): 182.

studies. The work of Carl Knappett in various parts of my thesis has been an attestation to this. In *Thinking Through Material Culture*, he discusses the complexities of media across dynamic networks, including Minoan pottery, Nike sneakers, a Lego motorbike, car advertisements, and mailboxes.[164] Having published this study as a book in an archaeology series in 2005, Knappett has clearly already been a "media archaeologist" before media scholars decided he wasn't. Other archaeologists such as Lambros Malafouris and Ian Hodder publish on the complex, spatialised networks developed across media, and how humans participate with and in these media worlds.[165]

Architecting Indigenous Knowledge

Michel Foucault's passage with which I chose to open this conclusion shares Whitehead's process of symbolic reference as a method of archaeology—a reinforcement of the idea that the networks produced through the archaeological process build their own space, world, architecture. Networks architect, and they are architected. Something that I did not foresee in this project was a discovery of the ways that archaeological theory appear to have derived from Indigenous philosophies of materiality, space, and knowledge. Although I sense that media archaeology is still quite juvenile in its self-recognition and definition of what it is, it clearly is already pulling from archaeology, which has pulled from anthropology in its discussions of material agency and networks. Jessica Horton and Janet Berlo have argued that Western/Eurocentric anthropology is already a discipline that has been formed through an exchange of cultural approaches on materiality and meaning:

> Indigenous scholars and scholars of the indigenous will attest to the survival of alternative intellectual traditions in which the liveliness of matter is grasped as quite ordinary, both inside, and at the fringes of, European modernity. Once we take indigenous worldviews into account, the "new materialisms" are no longer new.[166]

Horton and Berlo further write that modern academic trends have been set up as a structure that delegitimises Indigenous ways of understanding the world, even while capitalising on

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[164] Carl Knappett, *Thinking Through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).
[165] See Lambros Malafouris, *How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); and Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).
[166] Jessica L. Horton and Janet Catherine Berlo, "Beyond the Mirror: Indigenous Ecologies and 'New Materialisms' in Contemporary Art," *Third Text* 27, no. 1 (2013): 18.

anthropological research that has clearly been shaped *with* Indigenous knowledge. My intention with this thesis is to braid the existing interwoven field of cinema and media studies with research methodologies that are already in place in architecture, archaeology and Indigenous thought. This approach is advocated by Daniel Wildcat, who writes "cooperative research methodologies need to be developed to ensure that proper recognition is given to traditional knowledge holders or indigenous scholars."[167] Wildcat offers the example of how difficult it is for contemporary scientists and scholars to gain the trust of Indigenous communities, concluding that "trust itself is a perfect example of the ontological criteria of the continuum of experience, for it emerges out of experience, as do many of the most important lessons we learn." Foucault's passage is not simply referring to the object/text, but to the discipline as well: archaeology and media archaeology have a causal relation with Indigenous knowledge. For disciplines to trust each other, they need to learn how to emerge together.

In my first chapter, "Miss Chief Eagle Testickle as Kent Monkman's Artist-Avatar in the Media Mix," I established Miss Chief as a star/character, positioning her traditional trickster role as a method of Indigenous storytelling among contemporary theories of media convergence. This is not simply "plugging" Monkman's work into an existing system, but rather pushes certain aspects of media studies to engage with theories of networks in a new way. As I mentioned in the introduction, the network is an integral part of Indigenous knowledge. The context and process of establishing a network is always moving—always emerging—and the ways in which things come together is how knowledge itself moves and forms. Archaeology already considers the network in its virtual and actual forms as something that constitutes a quality of space—this is how I want Miss Chief's world to be understood. Wildcat shares Horton and Berlo's unimpressed engagement with the current academic trends of things and material agency that avoid crediting Indigenous doctrines that have already been practicing a philosophy of process, networks, and space.[168] My intention is not to discredit disciplines that have been engaging in Indigenous forms of knowledge (most of which I assume are unaware that they are doing so), but rather, in the method of Horton and Berlo, I want to show how current trends in media studies

[167] Daniel R. Wildcat, "Indigenizing the Future: Why We Must Think Spatially in the Twenty-First Century." *American Studies* 46, no. 3/4 (2005): 435.
[168] Ibid., 438.

have not only been said before, but were previously delegitimised by Euro/Western thought.[169] Knowledge itself moves and emerges, according to the perceived value of its form(s).

The second chapter, "Kent Monkman's *Group of Seven Inches*: Contemporary Video, Media Archaeology, and Histories of Gay Indigenous Representation in Pornography," is an engagement with identity studies pertaining to sexuality and race that are brought up in the visual culture surrounding Monkman's work. It is important that I not ghettoise my research as either a study in queer cinema/media or as a resurgence in Indigenous theory—it is both and more. On the one hand, identity studies is limited in its ability to explain what it is that I feel when I experience Monkman's work, and how I come to perceive this moment in my experience. On the other, I share Huey Copeland's concern with the renewed interest in "new materialisms," and agree that identity and race studies are already engaged with bodily material that *matters.*[170] My second chapter was an exploration in histories of identity of both sexuality and race that are present in Monkman's work, all the while retaining the flow of media archaeology to achieve that goal. In other words, I connected networks, allowing a mediation of storytelling to expand far beyond the isolated moment of a direct experience with Monkman's films and videos. Copeland references Horton and Berlo's interest in identity as part of matter and media, but reminds his reader that the recent academic trend of materialist approaches to media has a history that is entwined with the atrocities and racisms of colonialism. While I see all three chapters of my thesis as exercises in theory, the second in particular shares Waugh's approach that is "defiantly materialist in its anchor in the text, … and in the primacy of the reader as potential consumer and negotiator of moving-image texts that are both here and queer."[171] Given that I have an extreme interest in pursuing studies of materiality and networks across media, it is time that the field begins to better situate itself within the political realm of lived experiences. Overall, studies in the cinematic have nearly exhausted an eager desire to use film, video, and other forms of the moving image as a way to discuss sexuality and race. What mostly happens is a discussion of content that jumps into historical and political contexts without acknowledging the media as

[169] This is an aspect that is brought up in Horton and Berlo, but exists as a book-length study in Raymond Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
[170] Huey Copeland, "Tending-toward-Blackness," *October* 156 (2016): 141.
[171] Thomas Waugh, *Romance of Transgression in Canada: Queering Sexualites, Nations, Cinemas* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 2006), 16.

part of the message.[172] Cinema in Monkman's world is a much broader concept, as it is both an apparatus of screening films and a multi-material world within a network of media. I intend to continue this thought in my future research as a way to better explain how identity and media studies co-compose in the emergent process of experience. Michael Hames-Garcia sees the future of queer Indigenous studies as an emergent field from both sides, acknowledging his own process through traditional philosophy that has brought him to a certain point in his research.[173] Queer theory and Indigenous studies are both "events" that have converged from across many disciplines to form their own nodes, their own spaces within the academy. A discipline of queer Indigenous studies has already surfaced, and Hames-Garcia recognises that "seeking to affirm the forms of knowing and living that have been developed among people of color and Indigenous people does not require a lack of engagement with other traditions of thought."[174] It is important to reflect on how knowledge already exists within a network of process. Ideas-as-agents tend toward a realisation and emerge as a space within discourse(s), eventually to establish a place of their own. The second chapter is a step in that direction.

Although my third chapter seems to function as a point of culmination after the first and second chapters, it operates more as a turnaround: with a physical understanding of architecture, the space of the network *of and between* media is better understood. Although I begin the thesis by progressively zooming out in order to see Monkman's works in a broad landscape, Whitehead's philosophy is focused on the tediously minute qualities of how perception comes to form. Tierney understands Whitehead's process as something that "produces, elaborates, and maintains the form of structure of material and organisms and that it consists of a complex series of exchanges between an organism and its environment."[175] Process is a continuous emergence of form, meaning that mediated forms of storytelling, despite Simpson's concern, are still forms of emergent knowledge. This is a reason why the theory of the network often collapses itself into

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[172] I am obviously borrowing from Marshall McLuhan's idea that "medium itself is the message, *not* the content": "*Playboy* Interview: A Candid Conversation With the High Priest of Popcult and Metaphysician of Media," in *Essential McLuhan*, ed. Eric McLuhan and Frank Zingrone (Concord, ON: House of Anansi Press, Ltd., 1995), 237.
[173] Michael Hames-Garcia, "What's After Queer Theory? Queer Ethnic and Indigenous Studies." *Feminist Studies* 39, no. 2 (2013): 390.
[174] Ibid., 391
[175] Thérèse Tierney, "Biological Networks: On Neurons, Cellular Automata, and Relational Architectures," in *Network Practices: New Strategies in Architecture and Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 79, 80.

something that is "not a network," or rather, that even though lines and connections can be made, they are always moving, landing, worlding. Once the network is grasped, it has already become something else. The network is a space because the process of becoming a network is a designation of, or rather production of the space through the event. This approach should not be separated from identity studies, as bodies themselves are events—material, fleshy things that are symbolic referents of the event that is bodying.[176]

Pierotti argues that Indigenous peoples have long thought of knowledge as spatial, concluding that "a major benefit of spatial thinking is its adaptability to new or changed environments; it is possible to re-create stories as time progresses and thus to redefine 'truths'."[177] This thesis is not just an effort to make sexuality more present in process philosophy, or process philosophy more present in sexuality. It would also be irresponsible to suggest that since erotic potential is already in process, the work is done. There is a necessary political dimension, as Gilley mentions, in the visceral display of erotic cultural production. Lived experiences of homophobic and/or racist oppression do not "go away" if the persecuted simply understand process philosophy. The chapters of this thesis are three little plateaus—explorations of thoughts within a movement toward a theory of cinema and media that is a fabrication of identity and process. My intention is to branch the existing threads that have inspired my research with the new methods of Indigenous knowledge that I have uncovered in the process. As I move past this master's degree—a project that began with a cinema of identity and became something beyond my imagined parameters—I hope to find a way to write about art and films from a new perspective. Does an Indigenous approach to visual arts and their media networks carry its value when the objects of study are no longer those of an Indigenous artist? Will I continue to make the claim that a resurgence of Indigenous knowledge is coemerging with the exciting milieu of media archaeology, and to what end? What would that project look like, and

[176] For Manning and Massumi, bodies are not already a preconstituted entity, but are in constant flux and emergence within their unique ecologies/worlds: "Bodyings forth as instants of existence, as organisms that person, as architectings of mobility. …Bodies in the making not as humans already existing but as perceptions on the cusp of environmentality, an ecology of becoming." Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 28.

[177] Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology*, 181; and also see Daniel Wildcat and Raymond Pierotti, "Finding the Indigenous in Indigenous Studies," *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal* 1, no. 1 (2000): 62.

who should be the one to pursue it? Instead of answers to these questions, I have only a concluding remark of hope:

> Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains."[178]
>
> – Alfred North Whitehead

[178] Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: Free Press, [1938] 1966), 168.

"In our Native traditions, it is not romanticism to refer to mountains, plants, animals, rivers, and so forth, as our teachers or elders—it is realism."[179]

- Daniel Wildcat

Figure 4.1 – Miss Chief, after reviving Romanticism, exits the ward of fine art where the casualties of modernity have been hospitalised. Still from: Kent Monkman, *Casualties of Modernity*, 2015.

[179] Wildcat, "Indigenizing the Future," 420.

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Monkman's Films

A Nation is Coming, Kent Monkman, Canada, 1996, 24 min.
Blood River, Kent Monkman, Canada, 2000, 23 min.
Group of Seven Inches, Kent Monkman, Canada, 2005, 7.5 min.
Robin's Hood, Kent Monkman, 2007, 6 min.
Shooting Geronimo, Kent Monkman, 2007, 11 min.
Dance to the Berdashe, Kent Monkman, Canada, 2008, 12 min.
Dance to Miss Chief, Kent Monkman, Canada, 2010, 5 min.
Mary, Kent Monkman, 2011, 3 min.
Casualties of Modernity, Kent Monkman, 2015, 14 min.

Other Films

The Back Row, Jerry Douglas, USA, 1973, 85 min.
Dust Unto Dust, Lancer Brooks [Tom de Simone], USA, 1970, 59 min.
The Exiles, Kent MacKenzie, USA, 1961, 72 min.
In the Land of the Headhunters, Edward S. Curtis, USA, 1914, 65 min.
Little Big Man, Arthur Penn, USA, 1970, 139 min.
Song of the Loon, Andrew Herbert, USA, 1970, 79 min.
Topping, John Greyson, Canada, 2000, 5 min.
Winnetou 1: Teil (*Apache Gold*), Harald Reinl, Germany, 1963, 101 min.
Winnetou 2: Teil (*Last of the Renegades*), Harald Reinl, Germany, 1964, 94 min.
Winnetou 3: Teil (*The Desperado Trail*). Harald Reinl, Germany, 1965, 93 min.

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Figure 0.4 – Kent Monkman, *Beaded Moccasins* (worn by Miss Chief), 2007.